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20 March 2009

Mr S Ratheram
Acting headteacher
Headlands School and Community Science College
Sewerby Road
Bridlington
YO16 6UR

Dear Mr Ratheram

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Headlands School and
Community Science College

Following my visit with David Muir HMI, Peter Bannon AI and Anthony Pearson AI to
your school on 18 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to
confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school 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 – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to discussion with the
lead inspector.

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, chair of governors and the Director of Lifelong Learning at East Riding of
Yorkshire LA.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Kirby
H M Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF HEADLANDS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SCIENCE COLLEGE

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 March 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, other senior staff, subject leaders, a group of teachers a group of students, a group of sixth form students, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

Since the last monitoring visit the substantive headteacher has resigned. The partnership director from South Hunsley School has been appointed in the capacity of acting headteacher until September 2010. The executive headteacher will continue to work in the school for one day each week. A new senior appointment has been made to the post of data manager.

Achievement and standards

The school's most recent assessment data shows that overall students are on track to meet attainment targets for 2009. This data has recently been made available to teachers, although there are difficulties around ease of access. Some teachers are beginning to use it to support lesson planning which better meets the abilities of all students in their classes. However, this practice is too infrequent. The school's work to accelerate students' progress since the last visit has had insufficient impact on achievement in lessons. The proportion of lessons in which students make good progress remains too low and the proportion where they make insufficient progress in their learning remains too high. The often well considered strategies agreed by the school to accelerate students' progress are used inconsistently.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise achievement and standards across the school – inadequate

Personal development and well-being

The number of exclusions continues to fall as systems for behaviour management become established and students get more used to the school's expectations of behaviour. The school has also become more adept at identifying students at risk of exclusion and finding ways of ensuring that they can continue to remain in school and make progress, for example, by providing courses more appropriate to their needs. Behaviour around the school at break and lunchtime continues to improve. Relatively little boisterousness is evident at these times although a few pupils show a marked reluctance to return to lessons after lunchtime.

In a small number of lessons learning was adversely affected by the behaviour of reluctant learners, particularly where their learning needs are not well catered for by the teacher. Continuing negative attitudes to school of some other students is evident in their arriving to school without bags and equipment.

The school's strenuous efforts to improve attendance have had a positive impact. Attendance continues to improve in comparison with rates at the time of the previous monitoring visit and the corresponding period in the previous school year. In particular, Year 11 attendance rates have improved and the level of persistent absence has reduced. The recent appointment of an office manager for the sixth form has contributed to more effective means of recording and promoting attendance. Sixth form attendance has improved since the previous visit, markedly so in Year 13.

During the visit, inspectors observed pupils arrival for school at the start of a morning session. Although staff at the school gates were assiduous in their encouragement of students to move quickly into school, a significant proportion of students, 91, arrived after the start of the first teaching period.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure systems to improve behaviour are effective and are applied consistently – satisfactory

Quality of provision

Since the last visit there has been no overall improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The proportion of good or better teaching has not increased and the proportion that is inadequate remains too high.

The quality of teaching is still too variable. Some outstanding and good teaching was observed. In these lessons, teachers had adopted the approaches agreed by the school and some were willing to take risks to try out innovative new approaches to help students learn. These lessons were well planned, teachers knew their students well, a lively pace was maintained with a variety of activities that successfully engaged students and retained their interest. Work rate did not diminish and students made good gains. However, a stubborn minority of teachers are complacent. Lessons are planned but pedestrian in their delivery. Learning material does not challenge or enthuse. In these lessons students make at best satisfactory and more often insufficient progress in their learning. Since the last visit there has been a reduction in the number of recorded behaviour incidents inside the classroom. Although unsatisfactory behaviour limited learning in a small number of lessons seen on this visit, not all teachers take advantage of the better climate for learning that has been established overall.

A new approach to using assessment information to support teachers' planning is in the early stages of development. This system is not used consistently well across

subjects and is often not carried through from the planning stage and in to the teaching activities. The purpose of the new 'learning plans', a strategy recently adopted to support students' learning, is not clearly understood by all teachers.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Eliminate all unsatisfactory teaching and improve the proportion of good teaching – inadequate

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has realigned further the responsibilities of senior staff and through recent new appointments has added to the school's capacity to improve. He has worked to make more positive links between the school and local community. Strategies initiated to bring about further school improvement since the last visit are appropriate. However, they are not being translated into classroom practice consistently across the school or with the required urgency. There is too great a variability in the rigour by which teachers are held to account by their managers.

Whilst some teachers are working hard and to good effect to improve their practice others have expectations of their students which are too low. Lines of accountability are not robust enough to bring the required level of challenge necessary for this to change. The level of challenge from managers at all levels to the persistent mediocre performance by a minority of teachers has been ineffective and has led to slippage. Consequently the overall pattern of improvement seen at the last two visits has stalled.

Senior staff responsible for leading improvement in teaching and learning are secure in their judgements, as confirmed by joint lesson observations with inspectors. They have an accurate picture of where teaching needs to improve. However, the large number of other staff who are involved in the lesson observation programme has resulted in the school's view of teaching and learning being more positive than that of inspectors. Inspectors found the proportion of lessons in which students made insufficient progress to be higher than that judged by the school. Nevertheless, the relentless focus on teaching and learning has raised the level of debate and frequency of dialogue around pedagogy. Staff report they are positive about the strategic direction of the school and are confident in the leadership arrangements.

On a number of other aspects of provision the school has made satisfactory progress, for example, plans to extend and increase sixth form provision are well advanced. A larger proportion of Year 11 students plan to progress to Year 12 than was the case this time last year. Students report they are encouraged by the developments in the sixth form. The school is aware of the demands this development will have on leadership and management capacity and has taken timely action to ensure they are well prepared. Governance arrangements and procedures have been further sharpened to increase the level of challenge to the headteacher.

That the school has specialist status as a science college is not immediately apparent to visitors as they move around the school and talk with staff and students. The profile of science as a lead subject is not high enough. Nevertheless, subject leaders in both science and mathematics, the second specialist subject, have been instrumental in developing lesson planning for whole school use. The mathematics department has developed intervention programmes for use across the wider curriculum to support underachieving students. Achievement in mathematics is a strength with challenging targets at Key Stage 4 being exceeded in 2008. The school's tracking data suggests that the current Year 11 is on course to meet targets in both specialist subjects in 2009. The school reports plans to strengthen the impact of specialist status.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management - inadequate

External support

The LA continues to offer high level of support. Feedback from reviews is detailed and helpful to the school. The school has wisely begun to implement some of the recommendations made by LA officers from the most recent whole-school and sixth form reviews. The LA senior officers continue to support the governing body well and the chair of governors reports this is beneficial. The school has entered into productive partnership arrangements with other post sixteen providers. The experience of these partners in delivering a wide variety of post-16 courses has been of benefit in developing the curriculum offer for September 2009.

Priorities for further improvement

- Secure consistency and greater rigour in the implementation of whole-school actions to improve provision and outcomes.