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Ms Ann Dudgeon  
The Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Dudgeon

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Coleshill School - a Maths and Computing College

Following my visit with Mick Saunders and Janet Simms to your school on 24 and 25 June 2009, 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 February 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to appropriate training and mentoring by the partner school.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families for Warwickshire.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## Special measures: monitoring of The Coleshill School - a Maths and Computing College

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 June 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed 42 lessons, scrutinised documents, and met with the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, middle managers, four groups of students, six parents, the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

Since the inspection in February 2009 that placed the school in special measures, the headteacher has resigned from the school. Since 5 May 2009, the school has been led by an acting headteacher and an executive headteacher of a successful Coventry school until a substantive headteacher can be appointed. In a short space of time, the acting and executive headteacher have: reduced the number of supply staff; created a draft school improvement plan; raised the morale of staff and students; and, eliminated the deficit budget.

### Achievement and standards

The last report identified that whilst students entered the school with broadly average standards, their attainment was below national averages by the time they left school, especially the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics. Boys underachieved significantly, especially in Years 7 to 9, and the school had failed to meet most of its specialist school targets.

The results of school based Key Stage 3 examinations earlier this year indicate that standards remain below national averages and below the targets set by the school. There have been no more GCSE or sixth form examination results since the last inspection, but the school predicts that GCSE and sixth form results will improve slightly this year. It was not possible to observe any Year 10, 11 or sixth form lessons during the visit as there were no students in school due to exam leave and work experience. The 42 Key Stage 3 lessons observed jointly with the senior staff confirm that students are still not making enough progress in lessons. School data confirms that boys are still underachieving compared with the girls in Key Stage 3. There has been no progress on identifying and supporting underachieving boys in the main school. There remains underachievement at all levels as reported at the last inspection.

Intervention strategies have been focused on the current Year 10 and a member of the senior leadership team is now accountable for identifying Year 10 students in nine categories, for example those who may attain a borderline C/D grade. It is too early to judge the impact of these intervention strategies.



Progress with improving standards since the last inspection – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

The last report identified that students' personal development and well-being were satisfactory. Sixth form students acted as good role models and most students across the school demonstrated satisfactory attitudes to learning. Behaviour was a concern of a small minority of students, sometimes disturbing the learning of others.

The behaviour of students has improved since the last inspection and the school is now tracking behaviour carefully. Exclusions, as a result, have been significantly reduced. In the lessons observed during the visit, behaviour was judged to be satisfactory. Around the school, at lunchtime and in the corridors between lessons, behaviour was also satisfactory. However, there remain inconsistencies in the way individual teachers manage the behaviour of the few who disrupt lessons. Students move off task when teaching is not sufficiently engaging or challenging.

Attendance is below the national average, and lower than at the time of the last inspection, due to school snow closures and a sickness bug.

### Quality of provision

The quality of provision was the largest area of concern at the last inspection. There was too much variation in the quality of teaching and students were not making enough progress in lessons. There were high levels of staff absence and behaviour was an issue in too many lessons.

During the inspection 42 lessons were observed but, whilst there are indications that the strategies for managing the behaviour of students are improving, there remains too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Too much remains inadequate. In the best lessons, students engage with stimulating activities and are challenged by the brisk pace of the teaching that constantly checks that they have understood the learning objective for the lesson. This is not the case in the majority of lessons, where the pace of learning is slow, activities are mundane, the teacher talks too much, and there is insufficient focus on engaging students and ensuring they all understand the learning objectives for the lesson.

Feedback to students about their work is still inadequate overall, although pockets of good practice exist with individual teachers, for example in English. Marking remains inconsistent in quality, therefore students are not systematically shown how to improve their work and develop their learning. Student discussion confirmed that they make the best progress where work is regularly marked and teachers' comments are clear about how their work can be improved.

There is a lot of data available in the school, but teachers are not sufficiently aware of how to use it. A robust system of tracking student progress is being developed and applied. The school has correctly identified considerable underachievement



across all years, including the sixth form. Much more challenging targets are now in place for expected progress because students' attainment at the end of Year 6 is properly taking into account. This data is available to teachers to use when planning lessons to focus on students' individual needs and potential. However, the impact of these new arrangements, and their consistency and coherence, is not yet apparent because students are still currently underachieving.

Requirements for the safeguarding of students are robust and firmly in place.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure all teachers maximise the achievement, learning and progress of all pupils in lessons and consequently provide high quality written feedback when assessing pupils' work – inadequate
- ensure there is a consistency and coherence in the way assessment information is used throughout the school to set realistic but challenging targets – inadequate
- monitor pupils' progress rigorously and systematically and make sure that individual pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work in all subjects – inadequate.

## Leadership and management

The considerable and prolonged staffing issues identified at the last inspection had accounted for a lot of the problems the school had encountered in recent years. The management had been distracted from its key priority of raising standards and strategic direction was not clear enough. Self-evaluation was not sufficiently accurate and rigorous, and judgements of the school's performance were not made against appropriate yardsticks. In the past the governors did not exert sufficient challenge to the school.

The acting and executive headteachers, in post only a matter of weeks, have already made considerable strides to raise the low morale of the staff and start the recovery process. They are fully aware of the extent of the job to do, and where inadequacies remain. For example, job descriptions of managers at all levels do not place sufficient emphasis on accountability for standards. This notwithstanding, they have already focused the staff on working together to improve provision and raise standards. They have empowered most senior staff. The impact of the new leadership has been noted by parents and students too. One commented, 'Improvement started as soon as the new senior team arrived,' and, students agree that 'teaching has got a lot better'. Collectively, the senior team now has the potential to act on the issues raised at the last inspection and on this visit's priorities for improvement. However, it is too early to judge the overall capacity to improve as there are currently insufficient outcomes to measure the impact of actions.

The school's baseline teaching grades made available to HMI were overgenerous. Around one third of the teaching observed during the visit was judged to be inadequate. The executive and acting headteachers have already started to produce



a draft school improvement plan focusing on the issues identified by the last inspection. However, there is insufficient match of this plan to the local authority support, monitoring and evaluation plan. The development of each issue is insufficiently mapped in bite sized chunks each term with measurable success criteria and too much is expressed as broad aims. As yet, there has been no substantive work on self-evaluation and improvement planning with middle managers.

The leadership of the specialist school status has lacked sufficient focus as too many targets have been missed and insufficient remedial action has occurred to redress the situation. Standards have improved in the specialist subjects of mathematics and information and communication technology. However, the impact of the specialist status on improving standards and provision across the school has been inadequate.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- increase the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels of leadership – inadequate.

#### External support

Since the school has been placed in special measures the local authority has acted swiftly to ensure that the school is well led and managed by appointing an acting and an executive headteacher. The local authority had identified previously that the school was in need of additional support and had placed the school in its own category of concern. Individual local authority support staff have provided good support for the school, other local authority support has been less successful, for example in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The local authority statement of action is a useful document that clearly outlines the nature of the support required. However, the ensuing support, monitoring and evaluation plan is not clear enough in setting out termly achievable, measurable milestones and success criteria to be a useful document for the local authority to measure the impact of its actions. There are currently insufficient termly evaluations by the local authority to measure the impact of individual local authority staff, including the School Improvement Partner, to inform future support requirements. As such, the support, monitoring and evaluation plan is currently inadequate and insufficiently aligned with the school's emerging development plans. There has been a change in the School Improvement Partner allocated to the school. It is too early to judge the impact of the support and challenge provided by this key external partner.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure all staff are supported to understand and use measurable learning objectives when planning lessons.
- Ensure all staff are supported to understand and use data to track progress.



- Devise an agreed whole school policy for regular marking and appropriate legible written feedback that identifies the next stage of learning.
- In collaboration with the local authority, devise a single school improvement plan that has clear and measurable termly targets and evaluations and is modified each term in response to local authority support outcomes.

