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8 December 2009

Mr Alex Russell  
The Headteacher  
Epsom and Ewell High School  
Ruxley Lane  
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Epsom  
KT19 9JW

Dear Mr Russell

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Epsom and Ewell High School

Following my visit with Grace Marriott, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – outstanding.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

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 the Interim Executive Board and the Strategic Director for Services for Families for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## Special measures: monitoring of Epsom and Ewell High School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 November 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, groups and individual members of staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the Interim Executive Board and a representative of the local authority.

### Context

There have been a number of changes to the staff of the school since the last monitoring visit. This includes the headteacher, who took up his post in July 2009, and a number of key department leaders who started in September 2009.

### Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Students at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form achieved grades in external examinations in 2009 that represent a significant improvement compared to previous years. Lesson observations confirm the hard work that has been undertaken by teachers and leaders within the school to engage students in learning. Good and outstanding lessons were observed and students' expectations of lessons are high. Behaviour in the school is good overall and students enjoy working towards, and exceeding, the challenging targets set for them. Assessment is now a strong element in most lessons and allows students to work increasingly independently. Although some teaching needs to improve further, leadership of teaching and learning is very strong and monitoring and support are leading to good, or outstanding, progress in the large majority of lessons. More able students are now a priority for the school and they are increasingly targeted to ensure that they make the higher levels of progress they are capable of. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities did not perform as well in the 2009 examinations, but changes in the leadership of this area are ensuring that rapid progress is now being made. Lesson observations in English and the school's own data show that the progress of students is much improved and the leadership of this area more secure.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the area for improvement:

- ensure that students make at least satisfactory progress across the school, particularly in English – good.

### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Students' attitudes to learning are now very positive as students feel valued. They appreciate the environmental changes and the investment in information and communication technology that enable them to learn in a more welcoming and



appropriate setting. There is a cooperative culture that is now strong in the school. The prefects take pride in the positions they hold and carry out duties conscientiously, diligently and with good humour. Attendance in the school has improved still further and is now above average.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the area for improvement:

- improve the attendance and behaviour of a significant minority of students – outstanding.

#### The effectiveness of provision

Relationships between students and staff are generally positive and productive. The majority of lessons lead to good or outstanding progress. Clearer planning of learning and highly skilled use of assessment in lessons support students to work more independently and ensure they are clearer about how to make the next steps in learning. Students are motivated by the high expectations, support and targets set. Increased challenge is being developed through revised targets for all students, but particularly for the more able. The less productive lessons lack pace and clear plans to cater for individual learning needs. The school is clear about the need to eliminate inadequate teaching and has a support structure in place that is effective in ensuring students now get a good deal. Teaching assistants are now used increasingly in lessons and the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasingly effective at ensuring they make better progress.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of all teaching and learning and ensure that students know how to improve their work – outstanding.

#### The effectiveness of leadership and management

There has been a significant improvement in leadership at all levels across the school. New staff have joined and existing staff have grown considerably. A clear sense of responsibility is present and an increasingly analytical approach is being taken by teachers and leaders across the school. This is ensuring the rapid transformation of the school. Although some leaders still have much to learn they have embraced opportunities for developing their skills and now add a considerable amount to the school. Middle leaders were observed in discussions about how students progress and how effective interventions strategies are working. This demonstrated their increasing ability to lead the learning in the school as well as their passion for providing excellence for their students. The systematic tracking of students' progress is embedding well with a range of data being used to inform analysis. The headteacher's clear and decisive leadership is ensuring that capacity is developing at all levels and increasing the sustainability of the school's development. Safeguarding procedures are effective. The school is systematic in its approach to improving procedures and policies in the school. Policies have recently been introduced to improve practice. Methods for monitoring the effectiveness of these are being planned. The Interim Executive Board are holding the school to account



well. It offers increasing challenge to the school and has clear plans for transition to a governing body.

Progress since the last monitoring visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of leadership and managers at all levels – outstanding
- put in place effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school – good.

#### External support

The school has continued to receive good support from the local authority. An additional member of the senior leadership team remains to support the school and ensure developments are sustained. The Interim Executive Board and school leaders direct the support they gain from the local authority well, as they know where to target support effectively.