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12 November 2009

Mr P Tarn
Headteacher
Scalby School
Fieldstead Crescent
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North Yorkshire
YO12 6TH

Dear Mr Tarn

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Scalby School

Following my visit with additional inspectors Peter Bannon, Judy Jones and Julie Price-Grimshaw to your school on 10 and 11 November, 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 third 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 – good

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 (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for North Yorkshire.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Scalby School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 November 2009

Evidence

Inspectors analysed a range of documents and students' work. They also held discussions with the principal, executive principal, senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, students, the chair of the IEB and the local authority representative who is also the school improvement partner. Inspectors observed 23 lessons, three vertical group tutor periods and an assembly.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in June 2009, eight teaching staff and 17 support staff have left the school. Nine support staff joined the school in September 2009 and a new faculty structure has been introduced. During this inspection, the school's progress on the deficit budget was not evaluated.

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

In 2009, improvements in the school's GCSE examination results were evident across a very large majority of subject areas. Particularly significant was the proportion of students who achieved five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics which was closer to twice the figure in 2008. Equally, outcomes in other key performance measures including the number of students attaining five A* to C and five A* to G grades also improved. These results overall reversed a two year decline in students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4.

This improving picture is also reflected generally in the progress of students currently in Years 7 to 11. The school's own assessment information indicates that, through sharply focused intervention and support, the rate of progress for both individuals and groups of students is continuing to improve rapidly.

Students overall are making better academic progress. Nonetheless, the school is fully aware that in some subject areas more still needs to be done to ensure that the school's realistic, yet challenging targets are fully met.

Progress since the previous visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure better achievement across subjects, especially English and mathematics - good

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Students continue to report a much improved ethos across the school and feel that better behaviour is impacting positively on the quality of their learning. The school is regarded as a happier and safer place to work and students generally enjoy their lessons. Overall, students now exhibit good levels of responsibility for their own behaviour around the school, with good attitudes to learning in the classroom evident.

Senior staff continue to monitor and support implementation of the behaviour management systems on a daily basis and have an accurate view of the quality of behaviour across the school. The school's work in this area has also had a positive impact on attendance and exclusions. The number of persistent absentees has been reduced, as has the percentage of students receiving fixed-term exclusions.

Progress since the previous visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the unacceptable behaviour of the significant minority of students – good

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve since the previous monitoring inspection and the school has responded well to the focused priority highlighted at the last visit. Overall, teaching is now at least satisfactory, with a fifth of lessons seen by inspectors judged as outstanding. However, variation remains with nearly a third of lessons observed judged satisfactory.

Of those lessons which were good or better, key characteristics included good use of assessment information, ensuring activities were well matched to students' needs, skilful questioning with judicious use of praise and high quality paired and group work where students fully understood the value of peer and self-assessment.

School leaders, through a series of monitoring strategies, are fully aware of the quality of teaching within each subject area and are working hard to improve any practice that is less than good.

The introduction of a subject monitoring and evaluation schedule, whole school marking procedures and a 'teaching and learning' group are examples of the school's robust approach to remedying specific areas requiring further improvement.

These developments, together with beneficial professional development and teachers' better use of the detailed and readily available assessment information, are enabling the school to raise the quality of classroom practice.

However, within some specialist subject areas, particularly design and technology, the school recognises that attainment and the quality of teaching, learning and progress are often no better than satisfactory. As a result, school leaders have already started to make changes, including the use of teaching support plans, where needed, and modification of the curriculum.

Leaders have also started to revise specialist status development planning, including work with partners and the wider community; plans now include reference to a range of new initiatives. Nevertheless, the school realises that there is scope for greater detail in terms of targets and intended outcomes for some aspects so that all developments can be robustly monitored and evaluated, particularly in terms of value for money.

Progress since the previous visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so it enables students to learn more effectively - good
- Improve the impact of the specialist status across the school – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal and senior leaders are continuing to ensure a rapid and effective rate of improvement across key areas with an increasing expectation of both the extended leadership team and middle leaders who are responding well. Improvements in the quality of classroom practice, students' academic performance and emerging developments in other student outcomes, including their contribution to the community, are particularly evident.

Whole school assessment systems used to track student performance have also been further refined, particularly at Key Stage 3 and the school has introduced a fully remodelled curriculum with new option choices for students in Years 9,10 and 11. Working with the local authority, school leaders have also started to develop the school's infrastructure, with improvements in both accommodation and resources.

Middle leaders from both core and non-core subjects have a greater clarity of purpose, fully understand their accountability for student performance and are continuing to develop their role within quality assurance. The departmental monitoring and evaluation schedule with a focus on classroom practice, assessment and workbook scrutiny, and the completion of subject self-evaluation and development plans are strengthening capacity at this level.

Although at an early stage, learning managers are also fully involved in closely monitoring the academic performance of their year groups alongside other wider

outcomes. Effective professional development opportunities are in place to further support leadership training within the school

In regular focused meetings, the IEB is continuing to provide a good level of challenge and has a clear view of the effectiveness of the school's work. The board is also actively working with parents through the parent consultation group. Well-considered arrangements are in place to secure the appointment of a new headteacher at the earliest opportunity to ensure capacity is maintained.

Progress since the previous visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure leaders at all levels, including governors, rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the school so they understand and take the actions necessary to increase the rate of improvement – good

External support

The school continues to receive good support and challenge from the school improvement partner; the local authority recently completed an internal review and evaluation of the school's work across all areas requiring improvement. External support remains principally provided by the National Leader in Education. However, this is now more focused in line with the improving rate of progress and the increasing capacity of school leadership. This action is well-judged.

Priorities for further improvement

- Build on the improvements in classroom practice to increase further the proportion of good or better lessons.
- Robustly monitor and evaluate the impact of the specialist status.