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12 March 2010

Mr David Griffin
The Headteacher
Dyson Perrins CofE Sports College
Yates Hay Road
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WR14 1WD

Dear Mr Griffin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Dyson Perrins CofE Sports College

Following my visit with Lesley Voaden and Patricia Potheary, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 10 March 2010, 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 January 2009. 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

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, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Worcester and the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Dyson Perrins CofE Sports College

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 10 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the School Leadership Group, groups of students, the heads of department for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, two year group heads, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning, the chair of governors, office staff and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Two teachers left at the end of the autumn term and were replaced with two temporary teachers. Governors also appointed a new head of department for Science. All three teachers took up their posts in January 2010. As part of the loose federation arrangements, staff from Dyson Perrins and Nunnery Wood High have continued to work together since the last visit.

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

The school's assessment information and lesson observation confirm that standards are steadily rising. They range from above to well below national expectations. The proportion of Year 11 students expected to gain 5+ A* to C GCSE grades, including English and maths has increased from the previous year. Although inconsistencies between the standards attained by students in different subjects remain, the gap between what the students are currently attaining and the standards they should be reaching for their age is reducing. For example, at the time of the last visit, 29% of the students in Year 9 were working at or above the expected level for their age in information communication technology. This has increased to 43%.

In the majority of lessons observed, students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities made at least satisfactory progress. Some made outstanding progress. Progress is accelerating, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11. For instance, the majority of students in these year groups are making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Some are making good progress. In Years 7 and 8 students are not making fast enough progress consistently. There are variations between the performance of boys and girls. For example, in Key Stage 3, girls make better progress in English than boys.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Accelerate students' progress and raise the standards they attain – satisfactory



Other relevant pupil outcomes

Students are pleased with the changes taking place in the school. They told inspectors that lessons are more interesting and teachers are increasingly giving them the opportunity to work practically. Behaviour in the majority of lessons is good and on occasions outstanding. When students do lose their concentration, it is because activities are either too easy or too difficult. Students' behaviour around school is good. Improvements in provision are contributing to the continued declining trend in exclusions. Attendance remains satisfactory.

The effectiveness of provision

Opportunities for staff to observe and share good practice alongside targeted support from senior leaders and a teacher from Nunnery Wood have contributed to improvements in teaching. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to inadequate. Over half of the lessons observed were good. An outstanding lesson was observed for the first time. Over a third of lessons were satisfactory. Although this proportion has stayed the same since the last visit, good aspects were observed in many of the satisfactory lessons. There are however, still too many inadequate lessons. As a consequence, the progress that some students make is not always as fast as it could be.

There are some common strengths in teaching. For example, teachers use questions effectively to challenge students' thinking and explain their ideas. An example of this was seen in a German lesson, where the teacher adapted his questions in order to successfully challenge students of different abilities. In the best lessons, assessment information is used well to plan activities which effectively meet the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. In these lessons, learning is fast paced and activities are interesting. As a result, students are motivated, keen to learn and progress accelerates. In the satisfactory lessons, progress slows because activities are not well matched to students' different needs. Occasionally, more able pupils have to complete activities that are similar to those for other ability groups before they can move onto more challenging work. In the inadequate lessons, students make insufficient progress because they are not clear about what they have to do. Expectations of what students are expected to achieve during these lessons are also too low.

Some teachers make reference to students' targets at the start of the lessons and clearly explain what students need to do to achieve their targets. This effective practice is helping to raise student' expectations, but is not yet widespread throughout the school. Teachers' marking has improved. A new 'star and target marking system' celebrates success and identifies what students need to do to improve. The implementation of this approach is inconsistent. As a result, some students are not always sure about the actions they need to take to improve.



Following the last visit, effective support from the local authority enabled senior leaders to take swift action and review provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Senior leaders have started to make the necessary changes required to further strengthen this aspect of the school's work. Despite better rates of progress, the headteacher is aware that leadership and management of the provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities is an area that still requires significant improvement.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensuring that teaching is closely matched to all students' needs and challenges the average and more able students fully – satisfactory
- Using targets to raise students' expectations of what they can achieve and giving them clear guidance about how to improve their performance – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The work of the senior leadership group and staff has led to a steady improvement in students' achievement and helped to strengthen the quality of teaching. The impact of their work can be seen in the better rates of progress, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11. The school has increased the frequency with which it checks the performance of students. The business manager, who is also a member of the senior leadership group has collated the whole school's assessment information and provided staff with a detailed analysis of students' performance in all subjects. Senior leaders are beginning to use this information to hold middle leaders to account for students' standards. The deputy headteacher has recently led a review of the English department. The review accurately identifies good practice as well as aspects which need to be further improved. These are all positive developments.

Self-evaluation is sound. The senior leaders' evaluation of progress since the last visit now makes greater reference to students' performance in different subjects and year groups. This is helping them to identify the students who are underachieving and would benefit from additional support. Their self-evaluation, however, does not make sufficient reference to the quality of teaching in all departments. This was reported on previously. As a result of this visit, the headteacher is planning to review the systems for monitoring and evaluation. He intends to ensure they are more manageable and enable all leaders to identify and make the necessary changes much more quickly.

Middle leaders are developing their roles satisfactorily and are gaining a clearer understanding of their responsibilities. Senior leaders and local authority staff have worked alongside middle leaders to help them develop the skills required to monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility. Some middle leaders, such as in English are providing staff with useful guidance following monitoring. Although middle leaders set clear timescales for when changes need to be made, they do not always specify when the actions they have identified will be reviewed and evaluated. This is



leading to inconsistent practice within the school. Middle leaders have recently evaluated the effectiveness of their departments. Some of the evaluations are too generous. The deputy headteacher has rightly asked all middle leaders to make sure that they place a greater emphasis on students' performance and the quality of teaching to inform their evaluations.

Governors are supportive and fully informed. Since the last visit, they have reviewed their roles and responsibilities and identified their training requirements. A few governors are beginning to check the work of the school for themselves. Despite these recent developments, not all governors are adequately fulfilling their essential role in supporting school improvement. For example, some governors are not yet holding the school to account for the standards attained by students.

Standards in the school's subject specialism, physical education, remain above national expectations. The school is using its specialism effectively to trial new teaching approaches. One example is the use of 'learning leaders,' which is being introduced throughout the school. It involves students working together and taking it in turns to support their peers during group activities. This approach was used effectively in an outstanding physical education lesson. In this lesson, learning leaders developed their own football skills while demonstrating and providing other students with precise feedback. The students made accelerated progress, worked with confidence and responded positively towards the learning leaders.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders and ensuring that they understand and are held accountable for students' standards – satisfactory
- Rigorously evaluating the impact of teaching on students' progress and taking swift action for improvement – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has provided the school with a suitable level of support. Middle leaders have appreciated the training that they have received. Good support has been provided to help the school review the provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The findings from this review clearly identify the actions that need to be taken to improve this aspect. The impact of the local authority's work has been satisfactory.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure all governors are fulfilling their essential roles and responsibilities and making a greater contribution to school improvement.

