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24 May 2010

Mr John Fitzgerald  
Headteacher  
Winterton Comprehensive School  
Newport Drive  
Winterton  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 9QD

Dear Mr Fitzgerald

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Winterton Comprehensive School with specialist status in Engineering

Following my visit with Paul Lowery HMI, to your school on 20-21 May 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 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 not 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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for North Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Winterton Comprehensive School with specialist status in Engineering

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 May 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, groups of students, members of staff, a representative from the local authority, the School Improvement Partner and a group of governors. Inspectors observed 17 part lessons, four of which were joint lesson observations with members of the senior leadership team. Six short visits were made to other lessons to look specifically at assessment.

## Context

Since the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed, he will take up post in June 2010. The advanced skills teacher left the school in April 2010. The school has made five new appointments for September 2010.

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

Since the last inspection much work has been done to improve the attainment and increase the achievement of students, especially for those in Year 11. Given the data, if they perform as expected, Year 11 should make better progress than last year's Year 11 and examination results should be higher. In the specialist status subjects of design technology and science the students are meeting the targets set.

However, the improvement in attainment and increase in achievement have happened as a result of the intervention strategies. For example, there are additional classes and some students are removed from some lessons to concentrate on other subjects. The issues which were restricting the students' progress, identified in the last inspection report, are still being seen in too many lessons. In particular, the quality of teaching is too varied. In too many lessons students do not make even satisfactory progress.

Challenging targets are set for all students. These targets and the students' progress towards them are monitored each half term. Parents are more regularly informed of the progress their children are making. However, the quality of the assessment data provided by staff is too variable. It is insufficiently detailed to enable the tracking of students' progress to be effective.

Progress since being subject to special measures:

- Improve students' progress and raise attainment – inadequate
- Improve the tracking of students' progress – inadequate



## The effectiveness of provision

Systems are in place to review and revise the Key Stage 4 curriculum to ensure it better meets the needs and interests of the students. Local consortium links are supporting a broader range of vocational options in order to enthuse and motivate students. Senior leaders are monitoring the impact of curricular changes and, as a result, some courses have been removed from the Key Stage 4 programme. The school has rightly delayed its review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

While there is a clear attempt to cater more effectively for the broad range of student needs, the curriculum experienced in lessons is not tailored enough to meet the needs of groups of learners. As a result, too many students are insufficiently challenged.

Curricular interventions are currently focused on Year 11 students preparing for GCSE examinations. There are some interventions in place in other year groups, for example, in Year 9 there is one-to-one tuition and a paired reading scheme, however, it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives on students' attainment. The school recognises a carefully targeted programme of interventions is required to secure greater progress in Years 7 to 10.

Inspectors found good teaching in only a minority of lessons. The majority of teaching was satisfactory. However, there was a small minority of lessons when teaching was inadequate. Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure students make appropriate progress.

In the most effective lessons the work is carefully planned. There is a crisp pace, students are challenged and motivated and, as a result, engage well. Work is matched to the needs of the individuals or groups within the class, enabling them all to make good progress. Teachers also give students worthwhile opportunities to undertake independent study.

Where teaching is less effective, planning concentrates exclusively on listing whole-class activities and on the routines of classroom management. Insufficient use is made of assessment data to inform planning. Too frequently, the whole class is set the same work. Consequently, some students receive insufficient challenge or support in order to progress in their learning. The pace is often too slow, teachers speak at length and some students become bored.

The use of regular assessment to check students' understanding is inconsistent. Staff over rely on one-to-one questioning, which inhibits the ability of all students in the class to assess and reflect on the progress they are making. The quality of the marking is also very variable. New approaches to ensure students are clear about their targets are having impact. However, too frequently, students are unclear as to what they need to do improve. This is because the marking guidance is too general



and targets are not followed up. Marking is having insufficient impact on securing subsequent improvements in students' work.

Progress since being subject to special measures:

- Robustly monitor the impact of the curriculum to ensure all students extend their learning and experience lessons that are well planned and provide carefully targeted learning opportunities for the full range of abilities – inadequate

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior leadership team, led by the headteacher, took swift action after the December 2009 inspection to put in place strategies to improve the quality of teaching and develop the use of assessment to enable students to make better progress. At a whole-school level, data are used to identify where intervention strategies are needed to support students, but these are restricted mainly to Year 11. Therefore, although the students in Year 11 are making better progress, this is because of the intervention strategies. The impact of the strategies to improve classroom practice is limited.

The monitoring of teaching and classroom activities is now more frequent. All staff are involved in learning walks and there is an acceptance that lessons will be observed and the progress made by students monitored. Learning walks and lesson observations identify the positive aspects of learning and highlight the areas for improvement. The analysis from the regular programme of lesson observations shows the proportion of lessons graded good or better at 70% with none inadequate. Inspectors found that the observation grades were too generous with an undue emphasis placed on the structure and mechanics of the lessons rather than students' learning and progress. In the joint observations conducted in this inspection the senior leaders assessed accurately the students' progress and the quality of teaching.

The governing body is actively involved in monitoring the work of the school. After the previous inspection a separate governors' committee was created. This group is monitoring closely the work of the school and the progress made against the post-Ofsted action plan. Governors have visited the school to see lessons, speak to students and staff and look at marking in books. These visits are reported back to the whole governing body and provide a useful source of information. There is evidence that the governors are challenging the school more frequently and rigorously about the decisions made.



Progress since being subject to special measures:

- Improve leadership and management – satisfactory

#### External support

The school receives satisfactory support from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. The local authority action plan, when judged by Ofsted, needed some improvements. These have been made and the plan now clearly identifies what needs to be done, by when and by whom. There are also clear success criteria. The local authority has provided training and support for staff. More support, clearly linked to the areas for improvement, is in place for next half term. The local authority has appointed two additional governors to the governing body. These appointments have enhanced the governors' expertise. The School Improvement Partner is providing both challenge and support to the leaders and managers in the school.

