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21 February 2011

Ms Georgiana Sale  
Headteacher  
Lawnswood School  
Ring Road  
West Park  
Leeds  
LS16 5AG

Dear Ms Sale

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lawnswood School**

Following my visit, with Mr John Peckham, Her Majesty's Inspector and Mr Ray Biglin, additional inspector, to your school on 16-17 February 2011 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. 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 – good

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 Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009**

- Ensure that systems and procedures for the safeguarding of students are fully effective.
- Improve students' behaviour by ensuring consistent implementation of strategies for behaviour management across the school.
- Raise the quality of teaching by making sure that all staff have sufficiently high expectations of students and plan learning effectively.
- Improve attendance so it is at least in line with the national average.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Lawnswood School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 February 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher; leaders and managers in the school, including staff with responsibilities related to health, safety and welfare; groups of pupils; and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also talked to with a representative from the local authority. They observed 27 lessons.

#### **Context**

The headteacher left in December 2010 and an interim headteacher, who has been a consultant advising the school throughout 2010, took over in January 2011 pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher. A new coordinator for students who have special educational needs took up post in January 2011. There has been a further reorganisation and redistribution of roles and responsibilities of senior managers, including the appointment of a progress leader. An assistant headteacher seconded from a nearby school until August 2011 leads on the strategy for improving provision and outcomes in Year 7.

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

Attainment is rising and is steadily approaching the target the school has set itself for 2011. The school has focused on those students who may be at risk of underachieving, particularly in Year 11. Students' current attainment, as observed in lessons and in a sample of their work, is more broadly average across a wider range of subjects than before. Staff increasingly involve parents in supporting their children and are also intervening earlier, in Year 10, to help students maximise their progress. More regular assessment has begun in Years 7 to 9 so that progress is formally assessed throughout the school. Students enjoy lessons better than before. Teachers monitor their attitudes to learning. Students say that behaviour continues to improve and 'real learning' can take place. In many lessons students took an active part and were taking growing responsibility for reviewing how much they had learnt. The pace of learning continues to improve: students made good progress in many lessons seen. The school's systems for tracking progress now show more easily how groups of students, such as those with additional learning needs or disabilities, are doing compared to others.

#### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

The strategies to promote good behaviour are increasingly effective. Students are much more actively engaged in learning. In nearly all the lessons seen behaviour

was good. Students commented that there were fewer fights, less pushing in the corridors and that 'behaviour works best when the teacher applies a firm but relaxed approach'. They noted greater consistency in how staff manage behaviour. The number of exclusions has fallen further. Students like the 'attitude to learning' scale and say that this has helped to reduce low-level disruption in lessons. The positive effect of these strategies is relatively recent. Behaviour in the corridors was better on the first day of the inspection than on the second.

Attendance continues to improve following the introduction of new systems and personnel and a more robust stance. Attendance is higher than at similar periods last year, noticeably in Years 10 and 11. This improvement rate puts the school firmly on course towards reaching national average figures. Penalties have been imposed on some parents for failing to send their children to school. Staff have earmarked particular students they consider to be at risk of poor attendance and are working with their families. Good attendance is rewarded: the new rewards system includes attendance and punctuality targets. The improving attendance rate reflects students' increasing enjoyment of school.

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

- Improve students' behaviour by ensuring consistent implementation of strategies for behaviour management across the school – good
- Improve attendance so it is at least in line with the national average – good.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching continues. Those teachers whose lessons were identified as satisfactory have received training on how to improve further. Senior staff regularly visit lessons. Good practice is praised and areas for development are highlighted. There is a strong commitment to coaching and peer observation.

Staff expectations of students overall are sufficiently high. Over two-thirds of the lessons inspectors observed were good or better; several were outstanding. Where teaching was only satisfactory, expectations of groups or individual students were lower. Weaker lessons were characterised by a slower pace and lack of suitable challenge. In some lessons, teachers' plans had not been sufficiently adjusted to meet the full range of needs within the class.

Teachers check students' understanding well. In many lessons, especially in mathematics, they use interactive whiteboards well to present the outcomes expected and to review learning. In the best lessons teachers used questioning effectively and students were challenged to extend their answers. In all lessons relationships were good. Teachers organise a good range of learning activities, with an increasing emphasis on active learning, paired or group work. Teachers' marking has improved, with more subject-specific advice to students on how to improve.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching by making sure that all staff have sufficiently high expectations of students and plan learning effectively – good

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The school's capacity to improve continues to grow. The new headteacher has successfully re-energised staff behind the drive for improvement. Her strong vision and clear priorities are understood and shared by staff, who appreciate her support and are rising to the challenge. This faster pace of improvement is reflected in students' higher attendance rate and the increasing proportion of good teaching. Governors' skills in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school continue to develop well. Systems for doing this are increasingly effective.

The senior leadership team has been reorganised to promote better team working and to provide greater flexibility in supporting the headteacher. The heads of the key faculties of English and mathematics provide good role models. Newly qualified teachers receive good support.

A number of initiatives are gathering pace. For example, leaders regularly scrutinise samples of students' work with a particular focus, such as to see whether work is adjusted sufficiently to meet the needs of different ability groups. Assessment of students' progress is more regular. Consequently, staff can begin to tailor lessons more effectively to students' needs. The appointment of a new coordinator for special educational needs and the nomination of progress leaders have bolstered this approach.

The drive to improve literacy across the school is gathering momentum, with key words and concepts in all lessons and a programme to improve the reading skills of students in Year 7.

New staff appointments are adding to the school's capacity. The health and safety officer has had a good impact on reviewing and strengthening policies and practice to promote students' health, safety and well-being. All aspects of safeguarding are being systematically checked, focusing on high-risk subjects, such as physical education, design technology and science. The officer leads on raising staff awareness that safe practice is the responsibility of all staff. The number and deployment of staff trained to give first aid is kept under review to ensure that there are sufficient. Guidance for them has been updated. The single central register of staff meets current requirements.

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

- Ensure that systems and procedures for the safeguarding of students are fully effective – good

## **External support**

The local authority continues to provide good support, noticeably in reinforcing attendance, but also in building up the skills of leaders to effect improvement. The authority has provided funding to instigate collaborative partnerships with other schools to share good practice. Links have been made to move this initiative forward. As the reliability of the school's data and the skills of leaders and managers in self-evaluation have grown stronger, the local authority's advisers have taken a less-prominent role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.