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Miss Thomas
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Granville Sports College

Following my visit to your college on 5 April 2011 with Aune Turkson-Jones, additional inspector, 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 second monitoring inspection since the college became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is 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 – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed to all departments except mathematics.

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 Derbyshire.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- The governing body must ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding and community cohesion are met so that rigorous review, monitoring and evaluation lead to the identification of appropriate priorities for action.
- Raise standards of attainment and improve rates of progress by:
 - regularly collecting, analysing and using information about progress across the curriculum and age range for all groups of learners
 - acting regularly on the outcomes of the analysis of progress of groups of learners to tackle identified inequalities.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons to take account of pupils' prior attainment, assessment information and learning needs
 - plan interesting and varied tasks that challenge and engage pupils
 - share learning outcomes with pupils clearly and precisely to enable them to assess the progress they are making
 - check pupils' learning and progress more frequently during lessons so that plans can be adjusted to meet their needs
 - use questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and to extend their oral responses
 - group pupils more flexibly in order to provide targeted support, and to promote independent learning.
- Strengthen the role of leaders at all levels to promote consistency and high expectations through:
 - systematic monitoring of the quality of lessons to inform training and to enhance teaching skills
 - regular checks on the use of assessment and tracking information by teachers and pupils
 - agreed checks on all aspects of the school's work to ensure a coordinated and rigorous approach to self-evaluation
 - effective planning that includes precise objectives supported by measurable success criteria to track progress accurately.

Special measures: monitoring of Granville Sports College

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 5 April 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the college's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the college parliament, a group of governors, senior staff and representatives from the local authority.

Context

Since the previous visit a member of staff has returned from illness to the mathematics department.

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

Since the previous visit there has been considerable improvement in the way the college has collated assessment data, which now cover all year groups and all subjects. The deputy headteacher, who has very effectively led this work, recognises that the next step is to quality assure the data to ensure that they provide an accurate overview of pupils' progress. The Year 11 data have been used effectively in identifying pupils who were at most risk of not achieving their target grades. These 25 pupils have been mentored by a member of the senior leadership team, and as a result 22 out of the 25 have made marked improvements in their progress. There are good plans to extend this support for other Year 11 pupils, drawing in heads and assistant heads of house and form tutors as mentees.

The assessment data highlight some significant pockets of underachievement when taking into account target grades. For example, in Years 7–9 significant numbers of pupils are not on track to achieve their target grades in mathematics and science. The data have not yet been fully moderated to determine the cause of this underachievement and to uncover any inaccuracies. The fact that the college is now in a position to do this, because it has a complete set of data, demonstrates a stronger capacity for improvement.

The predictions for the 2011 Year 11 examinations suggest that standards in English and mathematics will improve compared to the previous year. Data for Year 11, which have been in place the longest, support this picture. The college's records of lesson observations indicate that a greater proportion of pupils are making satisfactory or better progress in lessons than earlier in the year. Findings from this monitoring visit confirmed this.

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

- raise standards of attainment and improve rates of progress – satisfactory.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour is generally good in that they follow instructions and often listen to teachers. In some lessons pupils lack a keenness to learn and exert themselves because the tasks they are given are not challenging or practical enough. For example, in a mathematics lesson a worksheet of 'sums' failed to ignite any enthusiasm for the subject.

Attendance has improved as a result of a concerted emphasis on its importance. The college now applies robust procedures to ensure that any attendance issues are quickly identified. The proportion of pupils who have high levels of non-attendance has fallen dramatically and this is a notable success story. Following a suggestion from parents and carers attending a parents' forum, the college now informs parents and carers when pupils' attendance is good or better.

At the time of the last visit the school parliament was given the challenge to get more involved in the work to improve the college, and has made excellent progress. It now meets regularly with senior staff and governors, and its members have taken on their roles as ambassadors extremely well. The parliament has become more effective in listening to other pupils and reporting back what it has achieved through, for example, assemblies and house council representatives. There has been a productive focus on working with senior staff to improve the way lessons start, with an explanation of what pupils are expected to learn, quickly followed by an engaging starter activity. The school parliament has been perceptive in its evaluation that progress in these areas is inconsistent across the college. Representatives from the parliament gave a presentation to one of the inspectors which demonstrated the very positive impact of their work. They showed that they have gleaned good examples of best practice through working with staff from a local college. The school has good plans to survey pupils on the quality of their learning experience and whether they have ever experienced a 'eureka moment' in lessons. Two representatives from the parliament attended the final feedback for this monitoring inspection and demonstrated their mature behaviour and dedication to improving the college.

The effectiveness of provision

The proportion of good teaching has improved since the previous visit. Just under half of the lessons observed were good or better. In stark contrast there remains some inadequate teaching. This variability highlights the inconsistent quality of teaching across the college and across some subject areas, most notably in mathematics where teaching ranged from inadequate to good with outstanding features. The outstanding features were demonstrated in the way the teacher made explicit her very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and what they were going to learn, and how they were to present their work.

Teachers' lesson plans have improved. All teachers use the same format, which records differentiated expectations. Although planning was always complete, some still confused what pupils were to learn with the activity to be completed. Planning is not yet using the level of detailed assessment data the college is now collating.

In some of the best lessons teachers were able to explain clearly to pupils what they were expected to learn using explicit criteria. For example, in a good physical education lesson the teacher asked pupils to use learning criteria to evaluate the level they had already reached, and then asked them to look at what they needed to do to achieve the next level up. Teachers have developed their use of questioning. When questioning was good it encouraged pupils to explain their thinking and give reasons for their answers or views. In some lessons teachers used good questioning to keep pupils focused on the task they had been given to complete, and as an appropriate challenge to move pupils on. Other checks by teachers ensured that pupils remained focused on their work, and they were given more or different work if they needed a greater challenge. In a few lessons teachers were not aware when pupils were floundering, or even when they were not working, and as a result pupils failed to make enough progress.

The key feature of weaker teaching is teachers' low expectations, which affect pupils' attitudes to learning, the quantity and quality of the work they produce and the standards they achieve. For example, learning expectations are sometimes not spelt out clearly enough to ensure that pupils of different abilities know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson. When teaching was less effective all pupils were asked to do the same work, and as a result the most able were insufficiently challenged and the least able sometimes left confused. Some teaching failed to instil in pupils an enthusiasm for learning because it made excessive use of textbooks or worksheets and provided no opportunities for practical activities. Instead teachers talked too much and directed too much of the lesson, and as a result there were no opportunities for pupils to work independently or learn through an open-ended challenge.

The previous monitoring inspection identified teachers' marking as a priority for further improvement. There has been some progress. There was evidence in pupils' work books that marking is now done more regularly. Where there had previously been little marking or it was superficial, more helpful constructive comments are beginning to appear. There remains some inconsistency.

Many of the classrooms and areas outside classrooms are tidy. There are good examples of displays which promote an enthusiasm for a subject and provide helpful advice for learning. In some classrooms and corridors pupils' work is very well displayed, promoting the best achievement, but in some parts of the college there is graffiti on walls, broken and dirty furniture and dull and uninspiring displays. These areas are not supporting the college's drive to raise expectations and promote high standards.

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

- increase the proportion of good teaching – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Following the previous visit the senior leadership team (SLT) has reassessed the key priorities for improvement work, and has successfully focused on key weaknesses. A new school improvement plan highlights a greater sense of rigour in the college's monitoring and evaluation work. Systems to hold differing levels of leadership to account are being used more robustly. The SLT are held to account by the headteacher, who models the highest expectations. In turn the senior leadership team, who have become far more confident in their roles, have regular 'Link Meetings' with the heads of faculty where the focus of discussions is around the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress. They have also effectively worked alongside heads of faculties in leading 'Faculty Forums' when all teaching staff in a faculty have discussed teaching and pupils' learning. These lines of accountability are helping to raise expectations but have not yet had a full impact. For example, the action required to improve provision in mathematics has not yet been driven through.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the mathematics development plan has been completely rewritten and is now a much improved working document. A significant amount of support from the SLT and local authority for the English and mathematics heads of faculty is beginning to have some impact. Improvements, however, have not yet been sustained and there is no convincing evidence that without this support the rigour of leadership would continue. There still remains much to do in mathematics to ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory, teachers' marking is always constructive and the classroom environment and culture promote enthusiasm for the subject.

Regular checks have been made on the quality of teaching and detailed evaluations have been shared with staff. Scrutiny of pupils' work, checks on teachers' planning and monitoring walks around the college have all taken place. The impact of all of this work has been a gradual increase in the proportion of good teaching. As the momentum of improvement increases, the college's self-evaluation is making it very clear where progress has not been made.

Since the previous visit some good work has been done on using the sports specialism to influence the changing culture within the college. The '5Rs' – which include resilience, responsibility and resourcefulness – have been promoted well in assemblies. There has been a review of the leadership academy, which is a set of strategies to develop leadership characteristics in all pupils. The specialism focus has initiated support for the most vulnerable pupils. For example, poor attendance is

successfully being tackled through encouraging pupils to be more involved in sports activities.

Safeguarding regulations and duties are met. The governing body has received training on promoting community cohesion. The school improvement plan identifies key actions to address issues raised by the community cohesion audit. In general the governing body feels much better equipped to hold the college to account. Governors have been linked to the key priorities in the school improvement plan, which has led to a much more focused scrutiny of the college's work. A 'learning walk' week was taking place at the time of the monitoring visit with some governors taking up the opportunity to see teaching and learning first hand.

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

- ensure statutory requirements for safeguarding and community cohesion are met – satisfactory
- strengthen the role of leaders to promote consistency and high expectations – good.

External support

Since the previous visit support and challenge from the local authority have been good and much better focused on addressing the key areas in need of improvement and more responsive to ongoing changing needs. The local authority statement has been revised to reflect this better focus and in doing so demonstrates a sense of urgency to tackle any weaknesses that persist. For example, the local authority recognised the need to offer support 'immediately' when a new information and communication technology member of staff was appointed. Rigorous monthly meetings are being held to evaluate the progress the college is making. The local authority has also successfully brokered support from another secondary school to aid the further development and refinement of the college's progress and tracking systems.

Priorities for further improvement

- Demonstrate that the analysis of assessment data has been used to set up intervention strategies which have successfully raised attainment in year groups other than Year 11.
- Improve the quality of teaching through the use of more interesting tasks and challenges given to pupils so that they are more enthusiastic about learning.
- Improve the areas of the building that do not promote the highest expectations that are best suited to the changing culture within the college.