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Mr G Bellamy
Headteacher
Sewell Park College
St Clement's Hill
Norwich
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Dear Mr Bellamy

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of Sewell Park College**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 October 2011 with Michael Stanton, additional inspector, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Given that the visit was unannounced, I am particularly grateful that staff and students were able to meet with us during the day and that a representative of the governing body and from the local authority each found time to join our discussions.

The headteacher took up post in April 2011, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 16 June 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school:

has made good progress in making improvements;

continues to demonstrate good capacity for sustained improvement;

and

the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.

Standards remain significantly below those found nationally, but are rising steadily and sustainably. Results in Key Stage 4 examinations in 2011 exceeded many of the school's challenging targets, but did not close the gap on national figures; 60% of Year 11 students achieved at least five A* to C grades at GCSE and 40% did so including English and mathematics. The improved performance of boys was a

September 2010



notable success, as were the impressive results achieved by the significant number of students who were recent arrivals into the country.

The school has developed rigorous systems for tracking the performance and progress of students. The six learning community managers have clear oversight of this information and assume responsibility for monitoring students' progress and targeting specific interventions. Analysis of assessment and progress data, as well as information on the attendance and behaviour of each student, forms the basis of personalised support and guidance for students. Intervention is carefully targeted for Year 11 students so they have the best opportunity to gain higher grades in English, mathematics and science. Analysis of tracking data indicates that, given their starting points, most students made at least expected and often good progress in 2011. Although standards remain low, attainment is on a strong trajectory of improvement for 2012 and beyond.

Evidence from school self-evaluation and lesson observations confirms this upward trend in achievement. Improved progress is the result of better provision, sharper use of assessment and more effective day-to-day management. In this regard, the headteacher has provided significant impetus to accelerate school improvement by successfully galvanising the efforts of all staff to improve students' attitudes and behaviour for learning. Expectations about punctuality, attendance, behaviour and participation in lessons have been clarified so that students are in no doubt about what is acceptable and are aware of the consequences of transgression. Although students note some inconsistency in the way that staff administer rewards and sanctions, they recognise that the new procedures are fair and that behaviour has improved markedly over the last 12 months. Importantly, the systems have created a positive climate for learning and promote better progress.

Students comply with instructions and respond to the teachers' expectations, both in lessons and around the school. They understand how their attitudes to learning affect their performance and consequently assume greater responsibility for their own participation and progress. Procedures for dealing with misdemeanours are unequivocal and serve as a suitable deterrent. Students temporarily withdrawn from lessons are adequately supported so they do not fall behind with their work. The school's robust approach has led to a reduction in the number of students subject to internal seclusion or fixed-term exclusion when compared with the same period last year. Moreover, students' much improved punctuality means that lessons start promptly and are seldom disrupted.

Since the last inspection action to strengthen the school's provision and outcomes has been concerted and effective. Within a short time, the headteacher has made a considerable impact on improving outcomes by raising the expectations of students, parents and staff. Increases in standards are securely founded on improvements in provision. Better teaching and changes to the curriculum have helped to accelerate progress, while strengthened systems for guidance and support have had an impact on attendance, which continues to increase steadily, notably in reducing levels of

persistent absenteeism. Policy revisions have suitably involved parents and carers, students, staff, governors and the local authority. The school balances well the need for both admonishment and praise, and makes every effort to recognise and reward positive achievement and effort. Students know their targets and are motivated by the school's high expectations and encouragement. The restructured pastoral system establishes closer links between academic progress and other aspects of students' attitudes and engagement. 'Learning conversations' with teachers and tutors routinely engage students in productive self-review. They are, for example, encouraged to evaluate their own performance and the impact of their own attitudes to learning, by assessing 'where I am now' and 'where I want to be'.

The quality of teaching has been strengthened by the school's rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Analysis of strengths and areas for improvement is effectively used to share best practice, shape whole-school training and target professional development and individual support. Since the last inspection the proportion of good and outstanding teaching has increased and the most significant weaknesses have been eliminated. Lessons are well structured with clear objectives and a suitable range of different activities. However, the best lessons are distinctive because teachers have nurtured students' independence and initiative so that they take responsibility for their own learning and have opportunities to work collaboratively to deepen their understanding. In these lessons, the assessment is effectively embedded through probing questioning, well-considered peer-evaluation and constructive marking of students' work. Some marking is indeed excellent, although in too many lessons it is either perfunctory or has negligible impact. There is a similarly wide variation in the quality of lesson planning. In general, teachers outline what students will learn but do not always consider how students will learn most effectively. Some lessons tend, therefore, to be rather teacher-centred. Observations indicate that when students are allowed to be passive learners, they are more likely to become bored or distracted. Behaviour-management strategies are then deployed to control behaviour rather than accelerate learning.

Rigorous self-evaluation ensures that senior leaders have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and its priorities for further improvement. Systematic monitoring by the governing body ensures that it is kept well informed. The school values its links with other local schools and the expertise that it draws from this collaboration and from local authority consultants.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Within 24 months, raise attainment to at least the national average by:
 - ensuring that the best teaching and learning practice is disseminated widely
 - making sure that all classes enable students of all abilities to make good progress
 - ensuring that poor behaviour is consistently and effectively managed by all staff
 - ensure that governors effectively and regularly monitor the effectiveness of behaviour policies.
- Within 12 months ensure that all internally excluded students have full access to appropriate programmes of work during exclusion sessions.
- Within six months review current behaviour policies and implement new ones by:
 - ensuring that parents and carers, students and staff and local authority are fully involved in the process.
 - renewed emphasis to ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities to others.
 - devising targets for the behaviour of groups, classes and if necessary individuals, so that they can be effectively monitored.