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Miss Sylvia Thomas
Headteacher
Granville Sports College
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Woodville
Swadlincote
DE11 7JR

Dear Miss Thomas

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Granville Sports College

Following my visit with Aune Turkson-Jones, additional inspector, to your school on 8–9 November 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 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 – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Up to five newly qualified teachers may be appointed to any department.

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 8–9 November 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and representatives from the school parliament. Inspectors also met with three members of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority. All of the lesson observations were conducted jointly with a senior member of staff. Lesson observations were for periods of time no shorter than 20 minutes. Other observations were made as part of briefer visits to lessons known as learning walks.

Context

Two teachers were absent due to long-term illness. As a result of other absences, there was a short term temporary teacher teaching 'cover supervisors' (Cover supervisors are support staff who do not have qualified teaching status.)

Since the previous monitoring inspection the school has appointed four newly qualified teachers.

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

The 2011 GCSE results were an improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C GCSE passes including English and mathematics rose by 6% to 52%. Boys have generally performed less well than girls, but the gap is closing. The proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C GCSE passes also improved and rose by 4% to 74%. There were two sets of results that were disappointing; in art and information and communication technology (ICT) results fell significantly. In both cases, the senior leadership team have been able to identify the reasons for this, which were predominately around the marking of course work.

Although the GCSE results improved, there were still significant groups of pupils who had not made sufficient progress since joining the school in Year 7. The school has identified that those who did not make sufficient progress mainly were from the following groups: boys, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and pupils with identified learning difficulties or special educational needs. As senior leaders recognise, the school's focus on those pupils capable of achieving a C grade at GCSE led to comparatively less attention to lower ability and above average ability pupils. The same groups of pupils in other cohorts now present similar challenges for teaching. The school is using data to identify pupils not making progress and responding through targeted teaching.

Assessments of pupils' progress are now regularly collected six times a year and this is helping to identify trends. Assessments are becoming more rigorous. The presentation of data has evolved over the last 12 months. The school is now in a position to give a 'snapshot' of pupils' achievement across the school as well as a more detailed analysis.

In lessons, pupils' generally made at least satisfactory progress. wherein most lessons pupils of above average ability or those with learning needs made no better than satisfactory progress.

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

In many of the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed learning. In the best lessons, pupils were quickly engaged in activities that they found interesting and challenging. For example, in one ICT lesson, pupils were very keen to evaluate each other's work and improve their own work using their peers' evaluations.

Behaviour around the school site is satisfactory. Attendance for most pupils is above average. Attendance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has improved significantly since the previous visit. While attendance is generally an improving picture, there remains a concern about the attendance of Year 11 boys. At 90.3%, the average attendance rate for this group of boys is well below the school average and has not improved when compared to their attendance in Year 10.

The school parliament is well organised and well led. It is an autonomous group of pupils who work with the senior leadership team and governing body. The parliament continues to align its work to the priorities set out in the school development plan, which ensures it has a good awareness of where improvement is still needed. Those parliament members who met with one of the inspectors highlighted the lack of different work in lessons for pupils of different abilities and perceptively summarised their comments by saying, 'It's like we all get put in the same boat.' The parliament has recently met with researchers from Keele University to discuss bullying. Following on from this meeting, an anti-bullying committee was set up to work with the parliament. Together they have produced and distributed to all pupils an anti-bullying questionnaire. This excellent questionnaire covers topics such as homophobic, racist and cyber bullying. Completed questionnaires have yet to be analysed.

The sport specialism continues to promote good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils who follow the leadership programme, for example, are involved in a range of activities to lead activities for other pupils, including those in

other schools. An example of the impact of the leadership programme has been the good work of those pupils taking the sports diploma who have led physical education lessons in the nearby pupil referral unit for pupils aged 7–11.

The effectiveness of provision

The school's own records of lesson observations show that the proportion of good and outstanding lessons has increased since the previous monitoring inspection. All of the teaching observed by inspectors was at least satisfactory, with some that was good. All of the lessons during this inspection were observed jointly with senior staff, and inspectors and staff were in agreement on all judgements. Furthermore, the senior staff provided perceptive evaluations and offered staff helpful development points. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous monitoring inspection and there is an obvious momentum of change that demonstrates good progress. There is still variability in the quality of teaching, however, and good teaching is not yet consistent enough across the school.

In the best lessons, pupils were given challenging activities and opportunities to discuss their work with peers or to work in groups. For example, in a music lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to discuss their individual aspirational targets and how they might achieve them. Good teaching ensured pupils knew how to improve their work. For example, in one English lesson, pupils were given very precise criteria to evaluate their persuasive writing and, as a result, used this to improve their writing. In a French lesson, pupils were shown how one sentence was more complex than another so that they were able to compare their own sentences and gauge how well they were doing. Teachers' questioning has improved and there were many good examples of teachers helping pupils to explain their own learning through a series of probing questions.

All lessons were well organised. Teachers share lesson objectives and expected outcomes and often return to these throughout the lesson to check on pupils' progress. Teachers' planning was usually detailed but not always clear as to how teaching was going to ensure pupils of different abilities were given appropriately challenging work. As a result, teaching did not always capitalise on the growing enthusiasm of pupils and sometimes missed opportunities to provide further challenge for the most able pupils to use their own initiative.

There has been good work done to improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work. Pupil's workbooks were graffiti free. In the best lessons teachers reminded pupils about the presentation of their work. Teachers' marking has also improved. Although not consistent across the school, there is evidence that teachers marking is more helpfully highlighting how well pupils have done and what they need to do next.

Reports from previous monitoring inspections have noted the uninspiring areas of the learning environment. It was very evident that there has been a lot of work done. There are some very good displays of pupils' work around the school and, in general, a greater sense of pride in making the school a place that values and encourages learning.

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

- increase the proportion of good teaching – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The senior leadership team have continued to drive forward improvement. There have been some significant successes including the rise in GCSE results and improvement to the quality of teaching. There remains some attention to detail on all of the priorities for improvement to ensure that there is sufficient and consistent improvement across the school.

Monitoring of teaching and learning has been at the forefront of leaders' work and this has ensured that there has been a clear agenda for change. Since the previous monitoring inspection, the senior leadership team have rigorously responded to teaching issues in art and ICT that resulted in poor results in the 2011 GCSE examinations. Staff absences, which make some subject areas more vulnerable to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, are being managed but present a challenge. There continues to be systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching. Through mentoring, support and challenge, teaching has improved and senior leadership team members were able to show inspectors where this has happened.

The use of the data on pupils' progress continues to underpin the work of the school. The use of data has evolved and the school is at a stage where it can securely embed a common approach. So far, the data has been used to identify groups who have not made sufficient progress, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Data to prove whether intervention work with these groups is improving rates of progress is inconclusive.

Senior leaders are effectively supporting and monitoring the work of the newly qualified teachers. The recruitment process for these new colleagues was appropriately rigorous and included the views of pupils. There has also been good support and challenge to hold middle leaders to account. A decision is still to be made about the structure of leadership for the subject areas of modern foreign languages and humanities.

The governing body are fully aware of the improvements made and the areas where work is in progress. They continue to monitor safeguarding. Safeguarding regulations are met. Community cohesion has been promoted through opportunities

given to pupils. For example a number of pupils from the gardening club have contributed to a village project and other pupils have joined the 50+ debating group.

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

The local authority support has been good. It is focused on the key areas that have been holding the school back. The local authority have reported on the improved GCSE results in 2011 and highlighted the concerns around the progress of some pupils. Taking into consideration the time the school has been subject to special measures, there remains a relatively high level of support. The local authority is confident that the school is well placed to reduce this level of support over the next few months.