

11 December 2008

Mr A Worthington  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Worthington

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF QUEENSBURY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Angela Headon HMI, Joan McKenna and Jim Bennetts Additional inspectors to your school on 9 and 10 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2008. 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teachers may not be appointed and the previous agreement to allow the appointment of an NQT in science has been rescinded.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Education for Bradford and Education Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF QUEENSBURY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 9 and 10 December 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with leaders and managers, the partner headteacher, staff, students, a representative from Education Bradford and the chair of the interim executive board (IEB).

### Context

Since the inspection in May, the governing body has been replaced by an IEB. A partnership has been established with a headteacher from a neighbouring secondary school and he is currently providing support for three days per week. The school has appointed a former Education Bradford consultant on a full-time temporary contract for three terms to support leadership and subject development. Teaching staff are receiving professional development and support from colleagues in other schools through opportunities to work together, both at Queensbury and in the host schools. Since the inspection, 19 teaching staff have left and 10 teachers have joined the school.

### Achievement and standards

The provisional results of test and examinations taken at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 in 2008 were lower than they should have been, given students' starting points. The school's provisional results for Key Stage 3 show that in 2008, standards attained in English, mathematics and science were below the 2007 national results. This was especially the case in English. Targets were not met in any of the subjects and students' achievement was inadequate. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE rose and was broadly in line with the provisional national figures for 2008. However, results remained below average on some important measures and, overall. In particular, the proportion of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics remained below average, following a fall in the mathematics results. Students did not achieve well enough in this key stage. Specialist targets in information and communication technology were met at Key Stage 4. However, they were not met in this subject at Key Stage 3 or in either key stage in mathematics.

Whole-school arrangements for tracking students' progress have been improved and are now more thorough. Assessment information is collected regularly and stored electronically to enable detailed analysis. Senior leaders use the data collected to identify where underachievement is occurring and where intervention is necessary. Middle leaders are playing an increasing role in identifying additional action to take to raise standards. However, not all teachers are using the information about

individuals' progress sufficiently to plan lessons that meet the range of needs in their classes, despite the school's expectation that they should.

Based on tracking data, the school is predicting an improvement in standards at the end of the current academic year. However, even if the predictions are met, it will not guarantee that students' progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Furthermore, inspection evidence indicates that students' achievement is not improving fast enough and too many students are not on course to meet their targets. This is because teaching is not ensuring that previous underachievement is being compensated for fully.

Progress since the inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement particularly at Key Stage 3 – inadequate

#### Personal development and well-being

Students in different year groups say that behaviour has improved over the last few months and inspectors found little evidence of inadequate behaviour during the inspection, in comparison with that noted at the time of the inspection in May 2008. Students attribute the improvement to the establishment of a behaviour policy with generally well understood rewards and sanctions, which are usually applied consistently. Exclusions are at similar levels to those in autumn 2007 and the internal exclusion rooms typically contain about a dozen students who are removed from lessons. The school's records show that as the behaviour policy has been bedding down, the number of negative behaviour points recorded has been on a falling trend. There is evidence that the school tackles firmly students whose behaviour is inappropriate, and that behaviour management is improving.

Records show that a small minority of teachers are associated with a substantial proportion of behaviour referrals. The school has further to go in eradicating situations in which students become bored or unhappy in lessons and respond with misbehaviour.

The school has tightened procedures for logging and following up on any incidents that might be of a racist nature; there have been very few this term. Inspectors observed positive relationships between students of different racial and other backgrounds and this was borne out in discussion with students. Some steps have been taken to broaden students' appreciation of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain. These are demonstrated in displays around school, in assemblies and through subject schemes of work. This enrichment of the curriculum is at an early stage of development and the school is yet to evaluate its impact. The school is aware of the need to avoid overemphasis of the differences between groups and to foster mutual respect and shared experience.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2008:

- Eradicate the poor behaviour of the significant minority of students who display inappropriate behaviour both in lessons and around school – satisfactory
- Ensure students are fully prepared for life in a multicultural society – satisfactory

### Quality of provision

Since the inspection in May 2008, the school has worked hard to introduce a range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching across the school; it has done this in close partnership with Education Bradford. A teaching and learning support group has been established to lead, monitor and evaluate this development. Staff training has focused strongly on developing and sharing good practice. A regular programme of lesson monitoring by senior and middle leaders is helping to identify weaker practice and provide teachers with focused support and opportunities to improve. The effectiveness of individual support plans and the 'fast track' programme, to help teachers develop consistently good practice, is being evaluated. The 'fast track' initiative is already showing some signs of success for those teachers involved. In addition, previous staffing difficulties are being gradually resolved.

Despite these efforts, the current overall picture is one of marked inconsistency between classes, year groups and subject areas in the quality of lesson planning, the marking of students' work and the quality of classroom practice. Fewer than half of the lessons seen during the monitoring inspection were good or better. This is significantly lower than the school's analysis; correspondingly, the proportion of both satisfactory and inadequate teaching observed remains too high. Of the 39 lesson observations conducted during the monitoring visit, 15% were inadequate compared to 24% of the lessons observed at the time on the inspection in May 2008. As the school recognises, the proportion of good or better teaching is not yet high enough to raise educational standards at the pace required after a period of sustained underachievement.

Expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally too low, as teachers are not using assessment information on students' ability levels effectively to plan their teaching to meet individual learning needs. Work is often pitched at the middle ability students in each group and, consequently, those capable of higher levels of attainment are not sufficiently challenged. Additionally, in some lessons, the learning needs of lower attaining students are not adequately met. Many learners are passive in lessons; hence, when students are required to work and think independently, they do not possess the skills or confidence to successfully tackle the tasks set. However, in the most effective lessons, good relationships, varied tasks that are well matched to individual needs and high expectations combine to ensure that students learn well and make good or better progress. In these lessons students also contribute significantly to their own learning.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2008:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that it is consistently good or better in order to remove the legacy of underachievement – inadequate

## Leadership and management

The school has taken steps this term to clarify the roles and responsibilities for colleagues in senior leadership positions, including responsibilities for each area of improvement. Plans have been drawn up to address each of the identified areas for improvement; while actions are for the most part appropriate, success criteria are not always clearly focused on tangible outcomes and milestones are often imprecise. Moreover, links between the actions taken to promote improvement are not clearly articulated and, hence, are not well understood by staff at different levels throughout the school. Although the school has taken some action to address the areas for improvement, it has very limited knowledge of the difference this has made. This is because the school's monitoring is not robust and evaluation is not sharp enough to provide an accurate picture of the impact of its work. This is currently limiting the accuracy with which specific areas of underperformance are identified and the effectiveness of how they are addressed. The headteacher partnership has provided useful support to the senior team and helped the school to make progress in relation to improving behaviour and the overall climate for learning within the school. The additional external support from colleagues in other schools and Education Bradford is beginning to have an impact on other areas for improvement such as teaching and learning but the deployment of individuals is not always systematically planned and clear expectations of impact are often not established.

Regular meetings between senior leadership team and middle leaders have been established, but the extent to which middle leaders are held to account over raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning lacks rigour. The skills of many middle leaders remain underdeveloped so they are currently having a limited impact on ensuring the school's improvement. Not all middle and senior leaders demonstrate the high levels of classroom skills necessary to model or evaluate good practice as leaders of learning. The establishment of an IEB with a good range of skills is beginning to increase the degree of challenge being provided for the school.

## Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2008

- Ensure leadership and management, at all levels, have the necessary capacity to improve the outcomes for students more rapidly – inadequate

## External support

The school is appreciative of the support offered by Education Bradford and other external partners. New working relationships have recently been established following changes to both the school improvement officer and the school improvement partner at the start of the autumn term. Plans have been reviewed and some aspects of the wide ranging additional support have been re-brokered and this

has slowed progress overall. Effective support has, however, been provided to help the school to establish an IEB and ensure that members have the appropriate skills and expertise to hold the school to account. The LA statement of action required revision in a number of areas. In response, the duration of the plan has been extended to July 2009 and some further detail has been incorporated. However, similar to the school's own plans, the success criteria in the Education Bradford support plan lack precision and timescales are often too lengthy. This is limiting the accuracy with which the progress of the plan can be monitored, although monthly meetings of the School Specific Monitoring Group involving all key stakeholders are providing a more objective view of progress in relation to the key issues.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- To sharpen evaluation and improve the coherence and impact of intervention to address the areas for improvement