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12 February 2010

Mr A Worthington  
Headteacher  
Queensbury School  
Deanstones Lane  
Queensbury  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD13 2AS

Dear Mr Worthington

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Queensbury School

Following my visit with Ariane Roberts, Chris Griffin and Pankaj Gulab, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 10-11 February 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fifth 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 - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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 Interim Executive Board (IEB), the Director of Education for Bradford and Education Bradford.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Gueli  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Queensbury School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 10-11 February 2010

## Evidence

Inspectors visited 40 lessons, and scrutinised teachers' planning and other documents including those relating to the school's own monitoring and evaluation. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the partnership headteacher, other leaders, members of staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, the school's National Challenge Adviser and the chair of the school's Interim Executive Board (IEB).

## Context

There have been no significant contextual changes to the school since the last visit.

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

School data suggests that students' current attainment at Key Stage 4 is improving and the gap is narrowing between students' expected outcomes and the outcomes achieved by students nationally at GCSE. However, the school is acutely aware that a key remaining challenge is to secure a convincing increase in the proportion of students' attaining 5 or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. At Key Stage 3, the school's tracking data suggests that the improvement to students' attainment realised in 2009 is being sustained. In all but one of the lessons seen students' progress was at least satisfactory and in almost half it was good. The school has a wider range of secure data on which to base its view of students' current attainment and systems to track their progress are more robust. The more systematic tracking of progress is resulting in swifter intervention for individual students in Year 11. Students with personal coaches are positive about the support they receive and others recognise how attending after school 'period 7' sessions is helping their progress. Targets are increasingly challenging and teachers generally amend targets upwards if students achieve them ahead of schedule.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement, particularly at Key Stage 3 – satisfactory.

## Other relevant pupil outcomes



Student behaviour shows steady improvement. For example, the number of students receiving 'yellow cards' for low level disruption incidents continues to decline term on term. Behaviour seen in lessons and around school during the inspection confirms this improvement. However, the school is aware that it still needs to address the very small minority of students who account for virtually half of the recorded 'behaviour points'. A pilot behaviour project involving a number of identified students in Year 8 is underway, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work. The incidents of fixed term exclusion have remained at a similar level since the last visit although the number of half days lost due to exclusion has declined.

The school has continued to broaden the range of events and experiences available to students to ensure they are fully prepared for life in a multicultural society. For example, new links with a school in Pakistan complement those already established with a school in Bangladesh. During the inspection the majority of lessons included an objective linked to promoting equality, diversity and community cohesion (EDCC) with the vast majority emphasising social cohesion. The school is monitoring student participation in activities and events; checking whether EDCC learning objectives are being used in lessons and ensuring that schemes of work in all subjects are contributing to this area for development. However, there has been limited detailed evaluation of the impact of improvements to provision in this respect since the last visit. The number of recorded racist incidents has declined significantly compared with the figures for the previous year and students say that the school is an increasingly cohesive community. Following a decline in the last academic year, students' attendance is improving. The numbers of students who are classified as persistent absentees has decreased significantly since September 2009.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- 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

The effectiveness of provision

There is a shared understanding of the components needed for good teaching and these elements are being incorporated much more consistently across the school. More strongly embedded features seen during the inspection included the use of a common planning structure along with the sharing of learning objectives and differentiated outcomes linked to levels or grades. In addition there was more effective use of mini whiteboards to check students' understanding seen in all subjects. Positive working relationships between teachers and students were also prevalent throughout the vast majority of lessons. In the best lessons, students responded well to the challenging and varied tasks delivered in an interesting and engaging way by the teacher. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm



helped to convey a love of their subject to students. These lessons also featured regular opportunities for discussion and student reflection to consolidate learning. Effective questioning involving the full class was a salient feature of much of the good teaching. Teachers provided questions which genuinely challenged the students to think, to draw on their previous learning and to give reasons for their answers. These questions were also used to probe the students' understanding and expose their misconceptions. Where teaching was satisfactory, some teachers did not give students sufficient opportunity to improve their learning through discussion or active self evaluation. These lessons were often very controlled and students were instructed to do many short tasks. Although students were working and behavior was compliant, teachers focused on what students were doing rather than on what they were learning. In some lessons seen, pace was so brisk that students were not given sufficient time to reflect, in order to consolidate their learning.

The use of assessment continues to improve. Teachers have an increasingly good knowledge about the prior learning of students and this is helping them to match the work more closely to students' different needs. There were some good examples seen of assessment criteria being used to motivate students and challenge them to improve. Students are more knowledgeable about their targets and in most cases their current levels of attainment. The quality and regularity of marking has improved. More often written comments are celebrating the good features of work and giving students useful, subject specific advice on how to improve.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to remove the legacy of underachievement – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher has an increasingly accurate view of the areas for development that remain and is using the skills of his leadership team more effectively to bring about the necessary improvement. Middle leaders in particular are increasingly contributing to school improvement. Their subject monitoring and evaluation is more robust and findings are being more consistently used to support colleagues in developing their practice. Frequent departmental discussions focusing on recent assessment information are being used more effectively to hold class teachers to account for students' progress. Consequently middle leaders have a much stronger knowledge of students' at risk of underachievement and are taking appropriate action more promptly. Senior leaders are continuing to hone their lesson observation skills and the school's judgements of teaching were broadly in line with that of inspectors. However, the school recognises that further refinement is needed in their evaluation of the borderline between 'satisfactory' or 'good' learning and progress. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) is receiving sharper information and continues to challenge and support the school effectively. They have a good understanding of the



progress made to date and are well aware of the need to sustain the more recent pace of improvement as the school moves towards re-inspection.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- Ensure leadership and management at all levels has the necessary capacity to improve the outcomes for students more rapidly - satisfactory

Impact of the specialist status

The work of the advanced skills teacher and other colleagues in the specialist subject of mathematics continues to make a significant contribution to the development of teaching and learning. Information and Communication Technology GCSE pathways have been refined to better match students' learning needs and aspirations leading to improving outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4.

External support

Education Bradford has continued to provide appropriate support for the school since the last monitoring inspection. The recent visit by two Education Bradford colleagues to evaluate the progress the school has made in improving teaching and learning provided an accurate snapshot of the strengths and remaining areas for development in relation to this key issue. Support has continued to be flexible in response to emerging issues with a phased reduction underway as the school builds further its own capacity and moves towards re-inspection. A tailored exit strategy is being formulated with Education Bradford recognising aspects of provision which have been better developed and areas where medium term support will need to continue.