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14 December 2010

Mrs Lesley Lyon and Ms Jo Horsey
Manning Comprehensive School
Robins Wood Road
Aspley
Nottingham
NG8 3LD

Dear Mrs Lyon and Ms Horsey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Manning Comprehensive School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the students I met with for their very insightful comments about the school.

The school continues to be led by two joint headteachers. Since the last inspection it has been confirmed that the school will become an academy from September 2011. Two acting deputy headteachers have been appointed until that time.

As a result of the inspection on 11 February 2009, 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 outstanding progress in making improvements and outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Regular, rigorous and accurate marking and assessment procedures are now in place for all subjects. Students say their work is marked every week in around half of their subjects and every two or three weeks in the remainder. Marking is detailed and points out any mistakes and misconceptions to students. Teachers provide excellent written feedback to students on their current level of attainment along with copious guidance about what they need to do to improve their work further. Students are very clear about their personal targets and about what they need to do to reach them.



About once a month, each subject team collates its assessment information and meets to identify which students are exceeding their targets and which are falling behind. These meetings discuss in detail what additional support any underachieving students require and this determines the intervention strategies which are subsequently provided to help them catch up. Monitoring of student performance data at a whole-school level is excellent. Assessment data from subject teams is collected every term apart from the data for English, mathematics and science which is collected monthly. Evaluation of the whole-school performance data is extremely detailed with the system enabling school leaders to check instantly on the progress being made by different groups of students.

This wealth of assessment information and performance data is used very well by the school to inform its future strategic priorities and to inform lesson planning. Teachers plan activities suitable for students' different starting points and take good account of their differing needs. This is particularly important in a school where around one fifth of students are in the early stages of learning English when they join. As a consequence of this excellent use of assessment information, most students make at least good progress with a minority making outstanding progress. Attainment on entry is very low and so despite the good progress students make, attainment remains below average at the end of Key Stage 4 but it is improving. The very good progress made by around one quarter of students is not included in the published performance data because these students do not participate in the Key Stage 2 national tests for various reasons. Many arrive from abroad for instance. A few students with special educational needs and/or disabilities underachieved in 2010 but this was mainly due to poor attendance in spite of the strenuous efforts of the school to get them into lessons. Tracking data shows that this group is making the expected progress this year. The sustained improvement over the last two years in the progress made by students shows that achievement is now good.

The performing arts specialism underpins a whole-school approach to creative learning which is having a demonstrable impact on making learning active and fun. Tutor groups have, for example, written song lyrics to summarise the salient points of geometry which they clearly enjoy performing and which helps them recall key facts. Other students spoke appreciatively of the many opportunities they have to participate in putting on shows and explained how this had helped boost their self-esteem and attitudes to work in other subjects. The school is working in partnership with a local university to provide a degree-level qualification in the creative learning work being developed by many of the staff.

Almost all teachers and support staff participate in a range of teaching and learning development groups. Each group has a different focus but all are involved in monitoring aspects of the work of the school and in using the outcomes to determine future policy. There is a tremendous sense of ownership and team work amongst the staff and it is clear that the school has succeeded in building a strong and sustainable culture of self-improvement. The quality of self evaluation is

excellent. The two headteachers and the senior leadership team provide outstanding leadership in driving the school forward.

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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2009.

- Raise achievement and standards by providing teachers with a clearer direction, guidance and strategies about how to accelerate individual students' progress.
- Ensure marking is consistent and indicates precisely how well students are doing, and what they need to do to improve their work to reach their targets.
- Ensure senior and middle leaders analyse and interpret students' performance data rigorously to aid evaluation and help secure good progress.