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4 July 2013

Scott Hudson  
Headteacher  
The Kingswood School  
Gainsborough Road  
Corby  
NN18 9NS

Dear Mr Hudson

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Kingswood School**

Following my visit with Lynn Cox and Paul O'Shea, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 2–3 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2012. 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.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers, in any area of the school, before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Northamptonshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

David Muir  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2012**

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
  - teachers insist on a high level of effort and work from students in each lesson
  - work is closely matched to the different abilities of students so it is not too hard or too easy
  - teachers check on students' progress in their learning during lessons and adjust their approach accordingly
  - students learn actively and participate fully in lessons.
  
- Raise achievement in the key subjects of English and mathematics by making sure that:
  - students get plenty of chance to practise their skills in speaking, reading and mental mathematics in interesting, practical contexts
  - teaching assistants have the skills they need to support the development of students' reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills consistently well.
  
- Develop effective strategies to improve the students' attendance and reduce exclusions.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring leaders and managers make frequent, thorough checks on teaching and learning
  - fully establishing formal performance management of teachers and managers so that they are held to account for students' progress
  - using student performance data to set challenging targets for students improving the range of subjects and courses available to students across the school, including in the sixth form
  - including religious studies at Key Stage 4.
  
- Improve governance by:
  - providing suitable training for governors in how to understand and use assessment and performance data
  - ensuring that the governing body checks on the impact of the way it spends the budget
  - consolidating the use of the 'adopted skills' audit procedures to evaluate the school's effectiveness.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2–3 July 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspectors observed 26 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with members of the school's leadership team. They included a range of subjects across the three key stages. Inspectors also scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, four members of the governing body, two groups of students, a representative from the local authority and various members of staff, including a group of middle leaders. All areas for improvement identified in the previous report were assessed for the progress made.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school at this time. However, the school will convert to become a sponsored academy in September. Additionally, several new members of staff will take up the posts after the summer holidays, including an assistant headteacher. A newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has already taken up her post in the school.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

There has been a major drive in the school to improve achievement. This has been very successful so far. The school is tracking the progress of all students and groups of students carefully and in such a way that rapid interventions take place as required if any students fall behind their target grades. Current tracking of students' progress shows a significant improvement compared with the same time last year. The data suggests that the school is well placed to make improvements in all major measures of progress and attainment. In 2012, 38% of students gained five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. Evidence of tracking this year shows that this will exceed 50% this year, with at least a similar proportion reaching that benchmark in 2014. When measuring the proportion of students who make at least three levels of progress from Year 7 to Year 11 in English and mathematics, the proportion looks likely to increase from 47% last year in English and from 37% in mathematics to over 60% in both subjects. These predictions are supported by well-triangulated data within the school and the improvements that are evident in teaching across the school. However, the school needs to have these predictions verified by the summer exam results in order to validate the accuracy of the school's new tracking systems. Nevertheless, in the GCSE mathematics examinations in April, 50% of students gained a C grade and 50% had made three level of progress in this subject. This limited set of results showed a marked improvement on the previous year and demonstrated that the forecasts were within 1% of the actual outcomes.

However, there is some evidence that target setting is less well developed in Key Stage 3, so lower attaining students are not closing the gap on other students. The

school has reviewed its provision for promoting literacy in the school to enable better access in lessons. As a result of this, teaching assistants will have a more focused role in supporting literacy under the supervision of the new assistant headteacher, who is due to start in September.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. During this inspection, some outstanding teaching was seen and a large proportion was good. This agrees with the school's view of typical teaching in the school. Joint observations with the school's leaders also showed that they have a strong appreciation of what makes good and better teaching. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have very strong relationships with students and know their needs and abilities extremely well. This allows them to focus their teaching so that learning is maximised for all students in their classes. This knowledge and understanding is significantly enhanced and supported by the strong data systems which have been developed and which now allow teachers to closely scrutinise the levels that their students are working at.

When teaching is strong, teachers direct their questions extremely skilfully and extend them so that they contribute to better learning. No teaching seen during this visit was inadequate, which is an impressive improvement and is due to the strategies the school has used to raise teachers' awareness of what they need to do to improve their practice. During feedback after lesson observations, teachers demonstrated a strong awareness of the quality of their teaching and, in nearly all cases, were clear about the learning that had taken place in the lesson and what they could do to make it better. The impressive improvements in the quality of teaching overall have also been supported by higher expectations by staff of what students can achieve. This is evident in most lessons, where students are fully engaged in their learning and have a far better understanding of what grades they are working towards and what they should do to meet or exceed their targets. Students also agree with the view that they are now learning more in lessons.

Where teaching requires improvement, students are provided with tasks that keep them busy but which do not provide a sufficient focus on learning to enable them to make good progress. In English lessons, there is still too much teaching which requires improvement. The school's leaders are aware of this and are taking action to tackle it. In the lessons seen during this visit, teaching assistants made a positive contribution to learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour continues to be a positive feature of the school and is improving so that it is even stronger. In lessons and around school, students are courteous and polite. A significant proportion of lessons seen during this visit had behaviour graded as

outstanding. This is because students are positively engaged in their learning and understand the impact that their attitudes have on their learning. In the very few lessons observed where behaviour was less than good, first-hand evidence shows that this was because the students were not engaged in the lessons and behaviour management strategies were not followed consistently. Students agree that behaviour is good and still improving.

Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly since the previous inspection due to the concerted efforts by staff, led by senior leaders. Attendance is now around the national average and is continuing to rise. Extra funding has been used to employ staff to support the improvements. The school has sent out clear messages to parents and students of the impact of missing school and how this can affect their students' grades. However, the school feels that this progress could be compromised by the local authority's unwillingness to use the legal framework to prosecute parents who allow their children to regularly miss school. In addition to these measures, the number of exclusions has also reduced significantly due to the consistently higher expectations of behaviour by staff.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The headteacher has shown outstanding skill in rapidly identifying where improvements are needed in the school and driving them forward apace, changing many aspects of the school in a short time. He has been supported to a very high standard by his leadership team, who have evolved into a sharp and knowledgeable team in a relatively short space of time. Despite the speed of the changes, the headteacher has managed to skilfully carry nearly all the staff with him. Staff have shown strong fortitude in taking on new ways of working and thriving on them. The school's evaluation of its own work is impressively accurate. All aspects of the school's work are scrupulously analysed and developed to increasingly meet the needs of students. This is reflected in the outstanding improvements evident since the previous inspection, including the quality of teaching and the relentless focus on driving up rates of progress.

All members of staff are aware of their part in improving the school and there is a strong belief in the school that the changes are well embedded. Middle leaders now have very clear roles and lines of accountability for the progress pupils make in their subjects and houses. These arrangements mean that any early signs of students working off target can be rapidly identified and they can be supported as appropriate.

The systems which have been developed for collating and analysing data are exemplary. The progress room shows, visually, exactly where all students are in all aspects of their schoolwork including academic progress across the range of subjects alongside other measures such as attendance. The set-up of the room allows teachers to use it to support students' understanding of where they are with their

education, what they are aiming for and how they can get there. It is also clear from this room, what interventions are being used and what their impact is. The presentation of the data is easy to understand by students and staff alike, so there is a common understanding about what is required to continue to drive the improvements already evident. This awareness has contributed to the improvements in setting ambitious targets for students' achievement since the inspection.

Teaching has improved due to the support provided. Senior leaders are sharply focused on where there are strengths in teaching and where improvements are needed. Now that the majority of teaching on a day-to-day basis is good, leaders are moving their focus to moving good teaching on to be better than that.

The range of subjects taught has been reviewed and changes made ready for September, including the teaching of religious studies in Key Stage 4. This review also includes the sixth form, where entry requirements have been reviewed so that students will have a more open option choice and will be more rigorously matched to courses to raise expectations of success.

As a result of training, the governing body is now holding the school's leaders to account more successfully. It is offering higher levels of challenge, so that leaders are required to provide strong evidence to support their judgments of the effectiveness of aspects of the school's work.

The plans for the school to convert to academy status are in the advanced stages, and several meetings have been held at senior leadership and governing body level to prepare the school for September.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to monitor the progress of the school through focused visits. However, some concerns arose during this visit around the support that the school receives from the local authority in its work to raise levels of attendance. Despite the school following procedures and protocols, the local authority has not yet resorted to legal action with the more persistent non-attenders. This is an option that the school feels would have a significant impact in being able to improve attendance further.