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20 April 2015

Miss Hellen Bolton  
Principal  
Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College  
Green Lane  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 3NW

Dear Miss Bolton

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College, Wakefield**

Following my visit to your school on 17 April 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher; the senior leadership team; a group of middle leaders, including those with responsibility for English and mathematics; the Governing Body and the Chief Executive Officer for the Pontefract Academies Trust to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. Short visits were made to ten lessons across all age groups and a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. During visits to lessons, the inspector focused on the presentation of students' work, the quality of written feedback and the participation of boys.

### **Context**

There have been no significant changes at the school since the inspection in January.

## Main findings

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is driving improvements at a lively but well regulated pace. The senior leadership team is increasingly effective and relatively new members are contributing well to improvements. Initiatives that were very new at the time of the inspection are becoming embedded and having an impact. Some actions have been refined in the light of experience.

The senior team is monitoring the work of middle leaders well and giving them good support that is helping them to rise to the challenge of increased accountability. Middle leadership is growing in strength as a result of this support, effective sharing of best practice and a bespoke programme of professional development. The programme includes inputs from successful leaders from other local schools and gives the team a valuable opportunity to reflect on their practice.

Governors offer good support to senior and middle leaders but they also challenge and question. They are monitoring improvements carefully against the action plan. They have a good understanding of the school's achievement data and the issues. Strengthening links with middle leaders enable them to triangulate the evidence presented at governor meetings and give deep insight into the issues affecting individual departments.

The action plan is written clearly and addresses all the areas for improvement from the inspection. Regular reviews are scheduled and the findings are colour-coded so that leaders and governors can monitor progress easily. Independent reviews carried out since the inspection along with detailed data reports have provided a baseline against which to set and monitor milestones.

There are effective mechanisms for teachers to spread best practice. Since the inspection there has been emphasis on using data to highlight under-performance and tailor teaching and interventions to meet students' needs. A new marking policy has also been implemented that is leading to more consistent and better quality written feedback. There are pockets of outstanding practice, for example in English, where students are acting on advice and making better progress as a result. Students' response to teachers' feedback is more variable in other areas, however. In the lessons visited, teachers were using a variety of effective strategies to engage students, especially boys, and promote a desire to learn.

Teachers use data to identify under-performance early in order to take remedial action quickly. Together with leaders they review the success of any interventions in order to amend them if necessary. Pastoral staff and subject teachers are working increasingly well together to provide individually tailored support. Leaders at all levels analyse achievement data by subject, by teacher and by different groups of students to identify issues quickly and take action. Current achievement data show that progress is accelerating and gaps between different groups of students are closing.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Carleton draws on expertise from across the local area. The headteacher receives valuable support from a Local Leader of Education based in Kirklees and the Wakefield Regional Teaching School Alliance provides the middle leadership programme mentioned earlier. The Pontefract Academies Trust includes a good secondary school and the two headteachers work together. Primary and secondary schools in the Trust also share information and expertise in order to ease the transition between the two.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**