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24 June 2013

Mr John Porteous  
Headteacher  
Turton High School Media Arts College  
Bromley Cross Road  
Bromley Cross  
Bolton  
Lancashire  
BL7 9LT

Dear Mr Porteous

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Turton High School Media Arts College, Bolton**

Following my visit to your school on 21 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, six representatives of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority and a group of students to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also had a telephone conversation with the school's Improvement Professional. I evaluated the school's action plan and scrutinised other documentation. I accompanied you on a learning walk for a brief opportunity to observe teaching and see students' work.

### **Context**

Since the inspection, the school has made a number of appointments of staff with key responsibilities. These include a new post of assistant headteacher and a new director of sixth form, both due to take up their posts in September; two internally-promoted deputy directors of sixth form took up post in May. The school has also recruited Key Stage 3 progress coordinators in English and science; it has revised the management in other areas such as support for students with special educational needs and whole-school approaches to developing students' literacy and numeracy

## **Main findings**

The school's leaders, including governors, understand that for achievement to be judged good, progress measures need to improve in comparison with national figures. Since the inspection, target-setting has been revised to give more prominence to measuring whether students make levels of progress that match or exceed national expectations. As a result, Key Stage 4 students are more aware of their targets for progress as well as their target grades. Some teachers are conveying higher expectations, with a focus that includes more students gaining the highest grades. The school's predictions for English and mathematics GCSE results in 2013 indicate that the proportion of students making the expected progress will match or exceed national expectations.

In their lesson observations, leaders now focus more than previously on students' progress and have begun to moderate their judgements of lessons with others from outside the school. Two of the school's stronger departments have been the subject of review since the inspection. A review of other subjects, including the key subject of mathematics, is planned for the next academic year and will include external consultants as well as senior staff from the school.

Leaders have responded quickly in restructuring several aspects of management in the school, including key appointments aimed at improving teaching. They have identified where teaching is strong and where it is weaker and are providing support to raise standards overall. Recent whole-school training has led to teachers being more aware of how to plan their teaching using data about individual students. Comments in students' books indicate that teachers are beginning to provide students with good-quality feedback about how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Leaders have not fully accepted the findings of the recent section 5 inspection. For example, the letter you sent to parents and your report to governors both contain serious criticisms that seek to discredit the inspection. Nevertheless, you and other leaders are committed to responding effectively to the areas for improvement identified and this is having an impact on improving provision in the school. The comprehensive improvement plan addresses the issues appropriately, is well organised, and includes clear timescales. In its current form, not all the success criteria are sufficiently quantified and, as a result, periodic review may be difficult.

Governors have taken the initiative to undertake a review of their effectiveness. They have engaged a National Leader of Governance, who has held initial meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and reviewed the minutes of governors' meetings. Further engagement, including attending a governors' meeting as an observer, is planned. Governors are well placed to monitor the school's promotion of literacy in all subjects; they appreciate the need to provide equivalent support for the promotion of mathematics across the curriculum.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- include a subject specialist in the review of mathematics planned for the autumn term and attend a subsequent improving-mathematics seminar
- revise the school's action plan so that future review is more effective by, where possible, ensuring that success criteria are more precisely measurable.

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

### **External support**

The local authority has supported the school in setting up an inspection action group that includes governors and outside consultants. Local authority officers have helped the school's leaders to establish closer liaison with the headteacher of another local school and have allocated extra days for the school's Improvement Professional to make supporting visits. The school has engaged a consultant with extensive inspection experience in order to gain a broader perspective on the quality of teaching and the progress that students are making.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Chambers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**