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21 October 2014

Mr John Senior  
Headteacher  
George Pindar Community Sports College  
Moor Lane  
Eastfield  
Scarborough  
North Yorkshire  
YO11 3LW

Dear Mr Senior

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to George Pindar Community Sports College, North Yorkshire**

Following my visit to your school on 20 October 2014, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- work with the local authority to secure sufficient leadership capacity, fill teaching vacancies and address remaining staffing issues as a matter of urgency
- review, revise and streamline the school's improvement planning and strategies to ensure that:
  - they accurately reflect the school's current circumstances
  - the number of key priorities and actions identified are realistic and achievable
  - there is a sharp focus on success measures that are based on raising student achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

- evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships and external support; ensuring this is matched closely to the school's current circumstances and priorities.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Governing Body, and the local authority lead adviser. Accompanied by senior leaders, I conducted a learning walk that included a number of short visits to English, mathematics, science, and design and technology lessons and scrutiny of a small sample of students' work in their books. I scrutinised a range of documents including the school's most recent student progress and achievement information, school development plans and the school review conducted by the local authority at the beginning of October 2014.

## **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in September 2013, the school has experienced high levels of staff absence due to illness. Several members of staff left the school during the course of the year. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting permanent staff to fill teaching and leadership posts, accounting for the numerous temporary teaching staff throughout the 2013-14 academic year. The leadership of the English and mathematics faculties has recently changed.

## **Main findings**

Insufficient leadership capacity and unstable staffing across many subject areas have been significant barriers to achieving the rapid and sustained improvement that this school requires. The efforts and energies of senior leaders have been diverted to reacting to problems and supporting and supervising a relatively inexperienced team of middle leaders as well as the many temporary staff required to cover high levels of staff absence and vacancies. As a result, leaders and managers have not been able to implement improvement plans with sufficient focus and rigour; strategies to raise achievement and secure the improvements needed have largely been ineffective.

While students continue to behave well and their attendance continues to show slow but steady improvement, there is too much variation in attainment across subjects and between different groups of students. It remains the case that not enough students are making as much progress as they should in a number of subjects. Unvalidated data for the 2013-14 academic year indicates a significant decline in the proportion of students obtaining five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics at the end of Year 11, when compared to the previous year. While school tracking information shows that more students in Key Stage 3 are now making expected or better than expected progress, it is too early to tell whether this will be sustained.

Senior leaders and governors are acutely aware of the challenges the school faces. Concerted efforts to tackle staffing and recruitment difficulties have been slower coming to fruition than anticipated. Recent appointments in English and mathematics, especially at middle leader level have increased capacity; although it is too soon to assess what impact this might have on improving the quality of teaching and accelerating students' progress and raising achievement in these subjects.

Governors are clear about their staffing, recruitment and retention priorities. They recognise the importance of working closely with the local authority to address these swiftly so that leaders can focus their energies on driving forward improvements as quickly as possible.

A range of plans and strategies have been developed since the previous section 5 inspection in June 2013. These now require revision to ensure they accurately reflect the school's current circumstances, focus sharply on a manageable number of key priorities that are most likely to have the biggest impact, and include clear and measurable success criteria linked to student outcomes.

### **External support**

The school has engaged external support from Wakefield City Academy Trust through a service level agreement. National College programmes for middle leaders and teacher leaders and engagement in professional networks are key elements of professional development and training for staff. However, as yet there is very little evidence available to show that any of the support the school is accessing is having a positive impact on addressing the priorities for improvement.

The local authority lead adviser, in place since September 2014, has acted quickly to establish productive and effective working relationships with school leaders. The local authority review of the school completed early in October accurately identifies the strengths, priorities and areas for improvement - taking account of the school's current circumstances and challenges. School leaders have taken on board the hard messages they have been given through the recent local authority review and this monitoring inspection. They demonstrate a clear intent to work with the lead adviser, local authority and other partners to bring about improvement as swiftly as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [[open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:open.FREESCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)] - for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school is a non-maintained special school [[hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hns.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk)]