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Mrs Diane Khanna
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Khanna

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school with another one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector on 7 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please pass on our thanks to the students we met who gave us a good insight into life in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 2–3 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure rigorous and consistent evaluation of the impact of strategies to improve teaching and learning, as a basis for future interventions
- raise standards and further strengthen achievement
- ensure that the teaching and assessment of citizenship across all years meet statutory requirements.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Students' attainment in 2009 represents a significant increase compared to those of previous years. Students are making improved progress and the school has developed a range of interventions that have ensured students are better prepared for examinations. The school recognises the need to provide further opportunities for the more able students. The school has worked very hard to improve teaching and almost all lessons are now satisfactory or better. There have been a large number of new staff in the school who have improved the quality of teaching. There is now a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of improvement strategies in order to increase the skills of all teachers and to accelerate students' progress. While these systems are embryonic, positive signs of improvement in teaching and learning are evident. The school recognises that there is still a great deal to do to ensure the legacy of underachievement is eradicated but sound foundations have been laid.



Lesson observations included good and outstanding teaching. These lessons were characterised by very positive relationships and clear support and guidance from teachers. High expectations, clear planning and effective assessment of learning contributed to higher rates of progress. Teaching, however, is inconsistent, as the planning and delivery of lessons do not always support students' good progress. Students are usually aware of their personal targets but are not always clear about how they can make better progress or work more independently. The behaviour of students in lessons varies considerably and some students still disturb the learning of others. The less successful lessons lacked a real relevance to individuals and had objectives that were vague. Students' attitudes to learning are increasingly positive. They were able to give a clear account of the improvements and the range of opportunities that they now have, with mature and insightful comments about how things could improve still further.

The school is aware of the strengths in departments and the areas requiring improvement. Targets set are challenging and school tracking systems are providing increasingly reliable information about students' progress. Middle leaders are more accountable and monitoring has improved. The school is aware that further work is needed to ensure that accountability and challenge are developed at all levels. The teaching of citizenship now meets the statutory requirements and the curriculum is developing further with, for example, cross-curricular projects developed through the arts specialism.

The school gains a wide range of good support as a member of the Kemnal Trust. The visual arts specialism is a strength within the school. Students enjoy the practical, active learning experiences and progress well. The specialism is providing an ethos of success that students aspire to.

The school has moved forward and has welcomed the refinement of the areas for development to support further progress.

- Ensure that, by September 2010, 75% of lessons secure the good or outstanding progress of students, by sharing the best of practice within the school.
- Raise standards and achievement of students. Meeting the targets set to exceed national expectations and ensuring that more able students achieve higher grades in examinations, across all subjects, in line with their capabilities.
- Develop the curriculum further to ensure there is a wide range of appropriate opportunities for all learners.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

