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14 December 2011

Mr A Mohammed
Headteacher
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Holly Lane
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Dear Mr Mohammed

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Holly Lodge Foundation High School College of Science

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since the last inspection, the extensive refurbishment and rebuilding of the school has been completed. In September 2011, the school opened a sixth form so that it now serves students from the age of 11 up to 19.

As a result of the inspection on 16 June 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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

The attainment of students has improved since the school was last inspected. At GCSE, the proportion of students gaining five passes at A* to C including English and mathematics has increased from 39% in 2010 to 50% in 2011. Students behave well in class and around the school and their attendance has also improved. In a Year 9 history lesson, students explored aspects of the slave trade. In this class, two-thirds of the students had special educational needs and/or disabilities. The teacher captured their interest with well-planned and varied activities. Their behaviour was outstanding as they actively supported each other in their learning. The students' literacy skills developed very well as the teacher made key vocabulary explicit, modelled it himself, and then used a series of open questions to stimulate debate in the class as a whole. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness also increased substantially as the teacher drew out parallels with the current drive for fair trade. During the lesson, students made outstanding progress. In lessons where

September 2010



students were only expected to take a more passive role, their progress was less secure, but students' behaviour and attitudes to learning remained good.

School leaders and managers have a wide programme to share best practice in teaching across the school. Working groups of teachers meet on a regular cycle to explore, develop and disseminate teaching methods and approaches to improving literacy. Opportunities are taken for teachers to observe best practice both within and across faculties, and videos of outstanding practice are used as an aid to staff training.

School leaders and managers have adapted the school's curriculum to provide intensive literacy support for students who start at the school with low literacy levels. Where appropriate, this includes the teaching of phonics. In lessons, teachers are developing their skills in planning for the needs of students with different abilities. This is most successful when lessons are planned to foster active student learning. The marking of students' work has also improved. Teachers provide advice to students on how their work can improve. The quality of this varies currently and students' response to that advice is unclear in many cases. In information and communication technology, an effective system for electronic marking is being used and this is also being disseminated to some other subjects.

Following a staffing restructure, a new management team has been established. This team fully shares the vision for the school that the headteacher and his senior team communicate. The leadership skills of this group are developing well and they have a good understanding of the strengths of their areas of responsibility and where further improvement is needed. Faculty reviews now take place each year and to a common format. These reviews then inform faculty and school plans.

The specialist science status of the school continues to make an impact on the curriculum and the quality of teaching. The school has taken on a strategic role in supporting other local schools in the development of science teaching.

The local authority has supported the school well and effective partnerships have been developed with other service providers.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010

- Raise achievement by continuing to increase the proportion of good and better teaching across the school by:
 - embedding good practice so that all teachers learn from the outstanding teaching that exists in the school
 - ensuring lessons meet the needs of all groups and individuals
 - ensuring that feedback on students' work provides good quality advice and guidance about how to improve.

- Achieve consistency and improvement by strengthening planning, monitoring and evaluation undertaken by middle leaders so that good practice is effectively modeled and shared.