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24 October 2013

Mrs Judith Long  
Kingsthorpe College  
Boughton Green Road  
Kingsthorpe  
NN2 7HR

Dear Mrs Long

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Kingsthorpe College**

Following my visit to your academy on 23 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- amend the academy development plan urgently, so that it lists actions, milestones and staff involved more clearly
- ensure that all those responsible for the performance management of staff are able to judge the quality of teaching accurately
- ensure that all staff experience the new performance management system as quickly as possible, and that teachers are then given immediate and effective support to improve their practice.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three representatives of the governing body, a representative of the academy sponsor and two of the academy's improvement partners. I evaluated the school improvement plan and a range of documentation. You took me on a tour of the school and we made brief visits to a range of classes.

## **Context**

You are about to hold interviews for the positions of lead practitioners in English, mathematics and science. A literacy coordinator, a transition coordinator and a gifted and talented coordinator have all been appointed from within the current staff.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior leaders have planned a range of improvement activity, some of which is well underway. Meetings which evaluate the progress individual students are making now taking place more frequently and are more focused. This has helped you to identify further gaps in achievement which need to be addressed.

You have developed a more robust system of performance management to improve teaching quality. You are monitoring how well teachers meet students' individual needs, how well they mark work, and if they are effectively fulfilling any extra responsibilities they have. The teachers who have experienced the new system have been set targets to help them improve.

You have begun a whole school training programme, some of which is tailored to teachers' individual needs. All members of staff are meeting more regularly to discuss how best to improve the quality of teaching.

You have been successful in reducing the amount of fixed-term exclusions and increasing your students' attendance.

Your academy development plan is ineffective and does not adequately reflect the activity that is taking place to improve the school. The proposed timescale for ensuring that all senior leaders can make accurate judgements on the quality of teaching does not reflect the required urgency.

Governors are well aware of the challenges facing the school and are providing an appropriate balance of challenge and support. There are now link governors for achievement, teaching, behaviour and leadership.

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 representative of the academy sponsor knows the academy well and he has taken steps to meet its needs. He assisted with the appointment of a new Chair of the Governing Body who is a very experienced education professional. He has also arranged for support from a National Teaching School which is strong in the teaching of mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Northamptonshire, the Education Funding Agency and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**