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Mr P Slack  
Headteacher  
Windsor Park CofE (C) Middle School  
Springfield Road  
Uttoxeter  
ST14 7JX

Dear Mr Slack

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Windsor Park CofE (C) Middle School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- ensure that the revised marking policy, especially 'next steps' marking, is used consistently by all staff, and that students have time to act upon the advice given
- speed up the rate of progress in writing of students who are eligible for the pupil premium grant
- improve students' reading skills in all year groups
- evaluate the effectiveness of the actions the school has taken to improve student achievement by using frequent checks on their progress and include these milestones in the development plan.

## **Evidence**

During the visit I met with you and members of your leadership team to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection and the last monitoring inspection visit. Meetings were held with the heads of English and mathematics, members of the governing body, eight students from Years 5, 6, 7 and 8, the Local Leader of Education, who is providing support for the school, and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school development plan. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's information about students' progress and attainment.

## **Context**

At the end of the summer term 2013 and after the last monitoring inspection visit in July 2013, the headteacher and two other members of the leadership team retired. A senior teacher from a local high school was appointed interim headteacher for the autumn term 2013. He was supported by an internal interim deputy headteacher. A permanent headteacher started in January 2014. The acting deputy headteacher's post has been made permanent. A number of the governing body stepped down and have been replaced. Two new teachers have been appointed to teach science.

## **Main findings**

Since September 2013, senior leaders have acted swiftly to improve the quality of teaching, assessment and procedures for middle leaders to measure the progress and attainment of students. Staff morale is higher and one teacher spoke for many when she said, 'this is an entirely different school, we're so much better at what we do'.

Ambitious targets are now set for individual students because teachers have higher expectations of what students can achieve. Students say there is greater challenge in their work. A new marking policy is in place, and as a result most teachers are becoming better at letting students know precisely what to do to improve their work. Students said that teachers are now more helpful and that the marking helps them make their work even better. However, students said that this is not the case in all lessons. Information provided by the school confirms that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Teachers now know what the elements of good and outstanding teaching are because of the well-focused training received from senior leaders, external consultants and the local authority. Teachers are beginning to put some of these elements into practice. For example, students said that they now have extra opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to different situations.

Leaders have introduced literacy and language intervention programmes to help students make the progress expected of them in reading and writing. Lesson observations undertaken by leaders indicate that this is beginning to make a positive difference to students' reading and writing skills. However, information from the

school and other sources indicate that students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding do not make expected progress in writing. In addition, students' reading skills in all year groups are still below that expected.

All leaders and teachers monitor the effect teaching has on student progress. Individual targets for what students are to achieve are used by each class teacher and understood by the students. Leaders and teachers meet weekly to discuss the students' progress. These meetings help to update the school development plan which now pinpoints appropriate actions to raise standards. However, the plan does not identify frequent milestones against which student progress can be measured.

Governors are now much more informed about students' progress and are more rigorous in how they question and challenge the school leaders.

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 provides effective support for this school by providing training for school leaders and governors. The Local Leader of Education is providing useful support in a range of areas, for example in improving the quality of teaching through effective use of questioning.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Humphries  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**