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Ms K Robertson
Headteacher
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Dear Ms K Robertson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Doubletrees School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please extend my thanks to your pupils, staff and to the Chair of the Governing Body who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed to the school. Two members of staff have received additional teaching and learning responsibility points to lead on behaviour, and communication and interaction, respectively. These posts will shortly be re-advertised, as both post holders are due to leave the school. Two members of staff with responsibility for subject leadership have been on long-term absence, and the English subject leader has just returned from maternity leave. In September 2010, the school revised its system for pupil grouping. Pupils are now grouped by ability within a key stage, with a specific class at each phase to cater for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder who also have severe learning needs.

As a result of the inspection on 4-5 February 2009, 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Pupils continue to be happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning at Doubletrees School. This contributes to their satisfactory progress. The introduction in September 2010 of a new data system to check three times a year on their progress, has provided a vehicle for a more accurate analysis to inform curriculum planning to ensure that all groups are doing equally well.

However, the system is at an early stage of development. While the collation of data is embedded, its analysis by staff is variable, in particular by those with subject responsibilities in monitoring the planning and delivery of their subjects across the school. The progress of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and that of more-able pupils, is uneven compared to the progress made by their peers. The school is aware of this and has targeted, for example, one-to-one support to accelerate the progress of more-able pupils.

Evidence from observing pupils' learning in a sample of lessons and from their work recorded in pupil profiles indicates that the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils now make faster progress in relation to their starting points. A particular strength of teaching is the effective deployment of additional adults to facilitate learning. Consequently, pupils behave well and this leads to a positive climate for learning in all classrooms. Staff, pupils and parents and carers have commented on the good impact on pupils' learning of the revised class grouping structures. Pupils especially enjoy practical learning. For example, a group of Key Stage 4 learners were keen to demonstrate their mathematical understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes by handling a range of objects. Similarly, a group of Key Stage 4 students with profound and multiple learning difficulties responded with enthusiasm to the practical learning opportunities available to them in a life skills class. This resulted in their outstanding progress in the lesson.

While senior leaders monitor and evaluate the school's work well, the variable practice by those with subject responsibilities leads to different performances across the school. Pupils perform better in mathematics than in English. This is as a result of a well-planned curriculum reflective of continuity and progression for all pupils. Inspectors saw good evidence of this across the Key Stage 4 to post-16 provision based on 'Foundation Learning', which ensured their good achievement. Long-term staff absence has affected, and continues to affect, the pace of progress in making improvements. The deputy headteacher has provided clear direction and secured professional development opportunities for subject leaders through coaching. Three members of staff have been attending the 'Leading from the Middle' training since September 2010.

The leadership team has demonstrated its commitment to improving the school. It has set challenging targets for pupils and teachers, and there is a whole-school expectation that these will be achieved. The school values the support provided by the School Improvement Partner.



This support has been particularly helpful in focusing the senior leaders on observing lessons resulting in the improved quality of teaching across the school. The developments that have taken place since the last inspection indicate a school that is moving forward steadily.

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

Anne Wright
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2009.

- Make more frequent checks on pupils' progress and use the information to ensure that all groups are doing equally well.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides continuity and progression in learning for all pupils.
- Develop the skills of staff with subject responsibilities in monitoring and planning the delivery of their subjects across the school.