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13 January 2011

Mr P Poulton  
The Headteacher  
Bensham Manor School  
Ecclesbourne Road  
Thornton Heath  
Surrey  
CR7 7BN

Dear Mr Poulton

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Bensham Manor School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please thank the pupils, staff, parents and carers, governors and the local authority representative who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, there has been some restructuring of the leadership team. The number of assistant headteacher posts has been increased to three; one of which is currently vacant. A new head of department for science took up post at the beginning of the summer term 2010. The head of the mathematics has recently resigned from this post and is overseeing the department until a new leader is recruited.

As a result of the inspection on 14 January 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising students' achievement.

Improvements are taking place in teaching, and the progress and achievement of students in science and mathematics are increasing. A higher proportion of students reach the challenging targets they are set. Improvements are particularly evident in science where teaching is more challenging. A wider range of teaching strategies has been introduced and good use is made of practical activities that ensure students understand key concepts. Students say that they enjoy science and, as a result, they are effectively making up lost ground. The teaching of mathematics has improved to a satisfactory level. Planning is carefully undertaken and work is better matched to individual students' needs. However, despite these improvements, those leading the

subject do not ensure that a sufficiently wide range of teaching approaches are used to make learning interesting. Consequently, improvements in students' achievements are not as rapid as they might be.

The curriculum is giving more emphasis to the development of students' basic skills across all subjects. The impact on students' achievements is particularly evident in English. In line with the school's work on the introduction of functional skills, the subject coordinators for English, mathematics and information and communication technology are taking a greater responsibility for monitoring how well students apply these skills in different subjects. This monitoring is more effective in English than in the other areas. Some creative projects are being undertaken, such as the cine club, and in developing a thematic approach to learning. Better links with colleges and schools are ensuring there is a wider range of options available, for example in construction, catering and horticulture. Opportunities for work experience have also increased. These developments are resulting in increased motivation from students.

Systems for assessing students' progress now ensure that tracking information is more accurate. Moderation exercises, both within the school and with other schools, are giving staff a much clearer idea about what constitutes a particular level of attainment. This information is being used to underpin improvements in teaching and learning. There is generally better marking of students' work so that they know how they might improve in future. Plenary sessions are now more effective in ensuring students understand how well they have achieved, but there is still inconsistency in this respect between classes and in the extent to which staff make use of students' individual targets to help accelerate their progress.

The local authority's revised statement of action is effective and fit for purpose. It sets out a support programme through to July 2011. The local authority has supported the senior leadership team in monitoring students' progress by ensuring challenging targets are set and by developing the skills of less experienced members in monitoring the quality of provision, especially teaching. Consultants have worked closely with teachers to ensure improvements in classroom practice, including the use of assessment. The governing body is now better equipped to hold the school to account as a result of training provided by the local authority. The local authority's principal advisor for inclusion has worked well with the headteacher to help improve overall provision.

This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

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

Kay Charlton  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010**

- Raise achievement and progress and the quality of teaching in mathematics and science to at least satisfactory by October 2010 by:
  - ensuring teaching is closely matched to the learning needs of students
  - using a wider range of teaching methods and approaches to make lessons more interesting.
  
- Improve the curriculum to ensure there are good opportunities for students to develop their basic skills across all subjects by October 2010.
  
- Develop systems for assessing the progress of students so that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve by:
  - improving the quality of marking to ensure that students are more aware of what they have to do to improve
  - consistently using students' individual targets for learning to enable them to make better progress in their skills
  - making better use of the ends of lessons to check what students have learnt to enable them to evaluate how well they have done.