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Ms Jones  
Headteacher  
Lord Grey School  
Rickley Lane  
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Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK3 6EW

Dear Ms Jones

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Lord Grey School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to the students and the members of the governing body who gave up their time to meet with me; their contributions were most helpful.

As a result of the inspection on 26–27 May 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 the students' achievement.

Students' achievement is inadequate, but is improving. Attainment remains low because there is a legacy of slow progress over time. However, in the 2010 examinations, there was a marked increase in the proportion of students who gained five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, the key measure for National Challenge schools such as Lord Grey. Moreover, students' work, data relating to the quality of learning as seen in lessons, and assessment information about students' achievement all indicate that rates of progress of most groups of students are beginning to accelerate, including at Key Stage 3. This is, in part, a reflection of relatively recent improvements to the curriculum. Consequently, the school's projected attainment for current Year 11 students, including the most able, is that they are on track to meet most of their challenging targets and secure better achievement in 2011.

The headteacher and other senior leaders have led a successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school, including through a considerable investment in continuing professional development. Inadequate teaching is now rare and the proportion of good or better teaching seen in lessons is rising at a steady rate, leading to improving students' progress. In most cases now, there is an appropriate match between the tasks set and students' needs and capabilities, and assessment information is used routinely by most teachers to assist the planning process. Challenge for all students, including for the more able, is also increasingly evident in lessons. Students reported that, on balance, lessons have become more interesting as they are now more often actively involved. However, the students' view that there remains considerable variability in the quality of learning experienced in different subjects and, occasionally, in classes taught by different teachers in the same subject is reflected both in inspection evidence and the school's own records.

School leaders have been creative and ambitious in their efforts to reduce low-level disruption in lessons, which is beginning to show signs of early impact, notably in Key Stage 4. Major structural changes, such as the introduction of a consequences-based behaviour management system and a vertical pastoral system, in which students from across Years 7 to 12 are placed in integrated tutor groups, have begun to raise students' expectations about the need for good behaviour and also increased staff's capacity to manage disruptive behaviour more effectively. However, the school accepts the view expressed by students that more needs to be done to ensure that the behaviour management system is implemented by staff in a consistent way. Instances of poor punctuality to school and to lessons have also been markedly reduced as a result of prompt and effective action by school leaders, including changes to the structure of the school day and through ensuring a clear and effective sanctions policy for students who are persistently late. Parents' and carers' awareness of their children's attendance and punctuality records have also been raised significantly through innovative use of the school's intranet.

The school's specialist languages status continues to make a useful contribution to the school and wider community. Its impact is most evident in the high proportion of students who gain an accreditation in a language (including community languages) and the strong support Lord Grey staff give to partner primary schools to develop language learning.

The local authority was informed that its statement of action, produced after the previous inspection, had been evaluated and fulfilled requirements. Evidence from the monitoring inspection indicates that it provides well-received support to the school which is effective in aiding the school to improve. This is particularly the case with regard to the strong contribution of the National Challenge Adviser in helping to align improvement strategies and the assistance given by the local authority in brokering partnership work with local secondary schools.

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

**Ken Bush**

**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and achievement across the school by:
  - ensuring there is a consistently high level of challenge in all lessons by using assessment information more effectively to match work to the needs of all students
  - ensuring teaching has more emphasis on developing students' competence as learners so that their interest, enthusiasm and engagement across a range of subjects are improved
  - securing better punctuality to school and to lessons
  - reducing low-level disruption in some lessons