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Mr M Fleetwood
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Fleetwood

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Temple Moor High School Science College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Peter McKay and John Barnes, additional inspectors, and I inspected your school on 16 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, students and members of the governing body who spoke to us during our visit.

Since the last inspection, roles within the senior leadership team have been revised and an assistant principal now has a specific responsibility for leadership development. The head of English has joined the extended leadership team and she will be joined in due course by the head of mathematics. In July 2010, together with five feeder primary schools, the school formed a Cooperative Trust to develop a range of high quality services for the whole community. At the start of the current academic year the school took possession of its new and refurbished buildings which include specialist facilities for students with profound learning difficulties and disabilities.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 September 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.

Senior leaders have made some progress in raising students' achievement and attainment. However, attainment remains average and achievement is no better than satisfactory. In 2010 the school gained its highest ever results at GCSE with 74% of students obtaining five subjects at grades A* to C. This was a considerable improvement on the proportion of students who obtained this benchmark in 2009. When English and mathematics are taken into consideration, the proportion of students obtaining five subjects at grades A* to C also increased, albeit by a much smaller amount. However, students' performance in different

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subjects was variable. Results in some subjects continued to be disappointing and improvements are not yet embedded across the curriculum. Results in mathematics improved and a higher proportion of students obtained at least a grade C in 2010 than in 2009. However, results in English Language fell and the proportion of students obtaining the highest grades of A or A* in 2010 was well below the proportion in 2009. Overall, not enough students are obtaining the highest grades. Actions taken to improve attainment and achievement include much tighter monitoring of students' performance. This has meant that underachievement is being identified more effectively than before and has led to more-focused intervention to support those most in need of assistance as they prepare for their GCSE examinations. School predictions indicate that in 2011 a greater proportion of students are on track to meet their challenging targets and to obtain at least a grade C in English and mathematics.

The school has taken a number of steps to spread best practice in teaching and learning across all departments. For example, good practice exhibited in English, history, physical education and modern foreign languages has been shared with colleagues in other departments through cross-curricular work. Middle leaders are developing their skills as leaders of learning. The Learning Team coaches colleagues who need support. The Teaching and Learning group is exploring good practice across faculties and meetings of faculty teams focus on sharing good practice tips. In these ways more students are benefiting from better teaching. However, such good practice is not embedded across the school. Teaching is improving but the rate has been patchy. Inspectors saw lessons where good progress was made. In these, students were willingly engaged because they had been motivated and the activities provided offered challenge and interest for all, regardless of ability. However, in weaker lessons progress is not rapid enough. In these, teachers do not consider carefully enough the needs of all students and insufficient opportunities were provided for students to become independent learners. Where students were expected to be passive learners, their interest soon waned with a corresponding decline in their behaviour. Marking is variable; there is good practice but marking does not always clearly outline the steps students need to take to improve their work. The use of assessment information is also variable and it is not always employed effectively to plan work which meets the learning needs of all students. Senior leaders are aware that practice is uneven and are determined to ensure greater consistency in teaching to help accelerate students' progress.

The school has implemented a series of measures to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. These have been very successful and attendance is now above average. Persistent absence has reduced considerably. Behaviour has also improved. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school during this visit was almost all good, though the progress in lessons of a small number of students was impeded by their own low-level misbehaviour. The number of callouts, where a student has to be removed from a lesson, has fallen by about two thirds. An effective alternative to fixed-term exclusion is provided by a seclusion room, where students follow their normal curriculum for a predetermined period. Older students who are disaffected or at risk of permanent exclusion can follow a personalised curriculum combining in-school, off-site and home-based learning and there is clear evidence of the positive impact of this on the behaviour of individual students as well

as on their attendance and achievement. A positive discipline system for managing behaviour in lessons is understood and accepted by the majority of students, though they commented that it was inconsistently applied by staff.

The school uses a wide range of methods of communicating with parents. These include letters, text messages and email. Parents receive termly reviews of academic progress, attendance and behaviour and an annual report from form tutors about progress towards personal targets. There are review days and teacher consultation sessions as well as termly meetings of the Parents' Voice group. Although students' personal planners provide a channel of communication between home and school, they are underused. Students reported that some parents still have concerns about the management of behaviour. Behaviour has improved but the school has little hard evidence about parental perceptions because it has relied on a commercially produced questionnaire which does not approach this issue in the same way as the questionnaire used at the last inspection did.

The school has used its specialist status in science to ensure that students have access to a wide and varied science curriculum. The specialism makes a commendable contribution to developing science skills of many children from local primary schools. However, the wider impact of the specialism on other subjects within the school has been limited and the school is not consistently meeting its targets across the specialist subjects.

Since the inspection and especially since the completion of the rebuilding programme, senior leaders and governors have been increasingly focused on the areas for improvement. The headteacher is well supported by a close and determined leadership team and an effective group of middle leaders, all of whom are determined to move the school forward. Action plans are in place but progress has been mixed. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been strengthened and middle leaders and teaching staff are aware that they are accountable for the performance of their teaching groups. Students' performance is analysed, underachievement identified and intervention structured to raise achievement. Self-evaluation is becoming more robust and the school is clear about the weaknesses which need to be dealt with and the barriers which have to be overcome to improve outcomes for all students.

The school has appreciated the good support it has received from the local authority, the School Improvement Partner and the work of a number of consultants. It has also benefited from partnerships with two neighbouring schools which have helped it, amongst other things, to develop its strategies to improve teaching and learning.

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

Michael Maddison
Her Majesty's Inspector

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Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 23 and 24 September 2009

- Raise students' achievement and attainment particularly in mathematics.
- Share and embed more effectively the best practice in teaching and learning in order to accelerate student progress.
- Increase students' rate of attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Improve the persistent poor behaviour of a small minority of students.
- Ensure that parents' perceptions of how effectively the school manages student behaviour and the quality of communications from school improves.