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11 March 2011

Mrs P Campbell  
Headteacher  
Werneth School  
Harrytown  
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Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK6 3BX

Dear Mrs Campbell,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Werneth School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave during my visit with Chris Griffin, additional inspector on 10 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please forward our thanks to your governors, the School Improvement Partner and your students for their help during the visit.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing, most notably in the mathematics department. This has addressed some of the issues around weaker teaching and long-term absence. In September 2010 an advanced skills teacher was employed in mathematics and another teacher has been employed through 'Gaining ground' funding. The school gained Specialist Status in 2008 for Performing and Visual Arts, it is partnered with a local Catholic High School and several local primary schools. Teachers from Werneth teach dance, drama, music and art in their partner schools. The school gained International School's Status and Artsmark Gold in 2010. The recent Ofsted subject inspection of citizenship rated this subject as outstanding.

As a result of the inspection on 16 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

From a low base in 2009 the school is making sustained improvement in terms of attainment and progress. Since the last inspection, attainment at Key Stage 4 has risen. Results for five A\* to C GCSE including English and mathematics have improved by 11 percentage points from 2009 to 2010. For five A\* to C GCSE there has been a 28 percentage point increase over the same period. The school's robust monitoring systems show that Year 11 students are on track for further improvements in 2011, particularly in English. Attainment in mathematics continues to improve, although senior leaders recognise that it is still not high

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

enough, especially at Key Stage 4. Current tracking shows that results for this year may be just below those of last year, although this is still an improving trend. Students have a better understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. The school provides a calm and orderly environment where students behave well and where relationships between students and staff are positive. When inspectors asked a small group of students what the most significant improvements had been since the last inspection, they said behaviour. The vast majority of behaviour in lessons observed was good or better. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than the majority of their peers and students who are eligible for free school meals attain above the national average for this group. This is due in part to the targeted support they receive both in and out of lessons.

During this inspection no inadequate teaching was observed and, while some good and outstanding teaching was seen, the majority remains satisfactory. In the best lessons, expectations are high and students make good progress because of effective teaching with plenty of challenge, independent learning and a brisk pace. In some lessons, however, students were passive, the pace was slow and the majority of the learning led by the teacher. Since the last inspection internal lesson observation and professional development initiatives have been expanded. They are having a positive impact and improving teaching and learning. Teachers and heads of department are now more accountable and have responded with enthusiasm and commitment to the changed culture of higher expectations. Leaders are aware that further improvement in assessment, challenge and pace is required in a variety of subjects. The curriculum has been strengthened with additional vocational courses and a greater focus on potentially high achievers. The specialism contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning. All specialist school targets were met last year.

Inspired leadership and effective improvement management from the headteacher have engendered a comprehensive change of culture over the last few years. While the school has worked hard to make improvements in a number of areas since the last inspection, staff now recognise the need to focus on just a couple of key priorities to raise the quality of teaching further across the school. Challenging targets are set and monitoring and intervention strategies have been tightened, as have the use and sharing of data analysis to promote improvement. Members of the governing body are taking a more robust approach to holding senior managers to account for performance having set up a Standards Committee since the last inspection to analyse and evaluate school performance. Senior leaders and the School Improvement Partner work closely together to make sure the school is moving in the right direction.

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  
Mrs Sally Kenyon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2011



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## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 16 September 2009**

- In order to improve further the school should increase the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, by reducing inconsistencies in teaching and learning across different subjects. To do this the school should:
  - eliminate the weaker teaching found in a minority of subjects, including mathematics
  - increase the proportion of lessons that are good or better by ensuring that in satisfactory lessons, where teachers provide engaging activities that students enjoy, they focus more on what students are actually learning
  - increase the emphasis on assessment of progress in lessons