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17 March 2011

Mr H Knox Macaulay
The Acting Headteacher
Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre
Nevill Road
Hove
East Sussex
BN3 7BN

Dear Mr Knox-Macaulay

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Grace Marriott, Chris Corp and I inspected your school on 16 March 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also convey our thanks to your students and the chair of your governing body for the help they provided.

Since the previous inspection, the appointment of a new headteacher has been made. This will take effect from the start of the summer term in April 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 3 February 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 we are 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.

Students' progress and learning have improved. Overall attainment is now better, although it remains below average. In lessons observed, learning was usually satisfactory or good. Learning is most effective when the students are set challenging and engaging tasks that they can tackle for themselves. Where learning is less effective, and in a small minority of observations, where it was inadequate, it is because the particular needs of the students are not catered for sufficiently well. In these lessons, students tend to be passive rather than active learners. Learning is particularly successful when planning is accurate and staff use assessment and other data well to ensure that work is pitched appropriately and the needs of all students are catered for. Expectations of what the students can achieve are also higher in



these lessons. Despite examples of at least good practice, the improvement in learning is only satisfactory because the quality of teaching is still inconsistent. Not enough lessons feature consistently good, or better, learning.

Satisfactory progress has been made in the use of assessment data to improve attainment. At a whole-school level, assessment procedures are being used well. Senior staff are using prior attainment data to set challenging targets for subject performance and for every student. Performance against these targets is then monitored. However, the use of data to inform sharper and more effective lesson planning is characterised by inconsistencies. In lessons not all staff are consistently using data to set precise targets for every student. Moreover, in a few lessons, students are not always aware of what their targets are, at what levels they are currently working and what they need to do to improve. Some good practice does exist, but the progress in using assessment data to set individual targets and then monitor progress is only satisfactory because of the inconsistencies that remain.

The school's status as a specialist language college continues to confer benefits on the students and has resulted in some enterprising curriculum developments. For example, on the day of the monitoring visit, Year 7 students were involved in a Chinese theme day. Specialist status has also impacted positively on the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 4 in terms of the variety of courses available including National Vocational Qualifications and vocational options. Specialist status has also increased partnership work and opportunities for students to study abroad.

Improvements in self-evaluation have been satisfactory. The support offered by the local authority has been satisfactory and is helping the school to progress. Although some inconsistencies remain, teaching and learning and the use of assessment data have improved. These developments all indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

Bill Stoneham
Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010:

- Raise standards and improve the rate of students' progress still further by:
 - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching throughout the school
 - ensuring that all lessons include activities which closely match students' interests and abilities, and include sufficient opportunities for active learning.
- Ensure that students understand the levels at which they are working and the targets at which they should be aiming by:
 - improving the quality and clarity of target-setting by teachers
 - giving all students sufficiently detailed information about how well they are doing, and what steps they need to take to improve the quality of their work.