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30 June 2011

Mr Dastagir  
Headteacher  
London Nautical School  
61 Stamford Street  
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London  
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Dear Mr Dastagir

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of London Nautical School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 11 November 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.

As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, students in all year groups are currently making satisfactory progress. In 2010, as a result of poor performance in some subjects, particularly mathematics and English, GCSE results fell and students' attainment was low because they made inadequate progress from their starting points. During this academic year, as a result of the introduction of a robust system for tracking students' progress, those who were underachieving were identified early, and very focused, personalised intervention was put in place to support them. Examination results already published and the school's own data show that in 2011, GCSE results are on course to improve to become close to the national average. Much of this is linked to a substantial improvement in outcomes for students in mathematics and English. The achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those who are known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to their peers. More-able students, who were underperforming at the time of the last inspection, are still not making as much progress in lessons as their peers because some teachers' expectations are too low.

More challenging work is not consistently provided for these students which would extend their learning and ensure that they can gain the higher grades.

Students are articulate, polite and when taught well, very keen to learn with high aspirations. They report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection and the atmosphere in school is friendly, with many teachers willing to 'go the extra mile' to support them. Older students are beginning to provide positive role models for younger ones. As a result of the efforts of the school's leaders and the fact that boys really enjoy being in school, both attendance and punctuality have improved substantially. Absence rates are now low and the proportion of persistent absentees is reducing.

Since the time of the last inspection, in-service training and coaching has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, especially the quality of questioning and the use of assessment. Although the school's own judgements about the quality of teaching are slightly generous, the proportion of good lessons has increased, with real strengths in mathematics, physical education and English. Relationships and behaviour are good and contribute to a productive atmosphere. In most lessons, students' learning is extended through good quality questioning, and in the best lessons clear success criteria are provided so that students know exactly what they need to do in order to complete the work well. However, students are not often given the opportunity to discuss their learning and many do not have the vocabulary to do so. Although lessons are planned thoroughly, often planning focuses more on what the teacher is doing, rather on the quality of students' learning, which leads to too much teacher talk and not enough time for students to work independently. Prior learning is not consistently taken into account and so learning objectives are not always sufficiently ambitious. Although teachers now have access to reliable data from assessment, especially in Years 10 and 11, this is not consistently used to ensure that the work provided is closely matched to individual students' needs. In spite of clear guidance, exercise books are not marked regularly enough, so students' work can remain unchecked for long periods. As a result, teachers do not always have reliable day-to-day assessment information, presentation is frequently poor and work remains unfinished. Even where work is marked, and clear guidance is given for students so they know what to do in order to improve, they are rarely given an opportunity to go back and make corrections.

The school's sports specialism has a high profile, with good quality teaching within the physical education department which encourages students to keep healthy and work together cooperatively. Other developments to the curriculum over the last year have improved provision for more-able students, and have also contributed to students' enjoyment of their learning.

Since the last inspection there has been a substantial turnover of staff and reorganisation of roles and responsibilities, with clear arrangements for line management and accountability. The team of senior and middle leaders is now stable. Training and coaching have been provided for new middle leaders and they

are ready and keen to develop their roles further. Systems for planning, monitoring and evaluating the school's work are now in place, but need further time to be consistently applied and fully embedded into day-to-day practice. The school's target setting is ambitious and some evaluation is carried out against quantifiable measures. The school is aware that there is still room for improvements to the quality of planning and monitoring.

Since the last inspection a new Chair of the Governing Body has been elected. Several new members have joined the governing body with a range of complementary backgrounds and skills. They are especially keen to reassert the school's nautical ethos. Committees have been reorganised and policies updated to provide a more robust infrastructure. Although there has been an emphasis on updating training and ensuring that governors have the skills to challenge the school effectively, the impact of this is not yet fully evident.

The school's single central record meets statutory requirements. However, during the monitoring visit, inspectors identified significant shortcomings in the implementation of the school's health and safety policy. The school's leaders have confirmed that they will tackle these issues urgently.

The school has used a wide range of support from the local authority, the School Improvement Partner, and some external consultants. There has been a substantial and positive impact on the quality of teaching, the management of students' behaviour and the quality of leadership including governance. As part of the government's Gaining Ground programme, the school's leaders have received useful advice and support from leaders in other 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

Mary Massey

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009**

- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress students make to be consistently good by:
  - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and are carefully matched to the varied needs of all students
  - asking probing questions in lessons which give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially the more able students
  - reviewing targets more systematically with students so they clearly understand how to improve.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on school improvement by:
  - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by setting quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success
  - working more intensively with families to improve attendance, especially in the sixth form
  - extending the capacity of leaders and governors still further to manage their areas of responsibility through coaching and training.