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Mr Chris Lewis
Headteacher
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Harbin Campus
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Dear Mr Lewis

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Poole High School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to students with whom I held discussions.

Since the previous inspection four new governors have joined the governing body. A new vice-chair of the governing body has also been elected. One member of the senior leadership team has left the school and a new head of science has been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 November 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The quality of teaching in the school has improved since the previous inspection and as a result students' achievement is rising. Inspection evidence indicates that the percentage of Year 11 students attaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics will be closer to the national average this summer than was the case last year. Attainment is rising in English but predicted grades indicate that challenging school targets in this subject will not be reached this summer. Improvements in teaching are being driven by robust monitoring linked with effective professional development. Joint observations undertaken during this inspection confirmed the accuracy of senior leaders' judgment of teaching. These observations indicate that the proportion of good teaching has increased since the previous inspection and the proportion of inadequate teaching has been reduced to

a small percentage. Teachers are now planning lessons that contain a greater variety of activities which actively engage students in learning. In particular, students are being provided with more opportunities to work in groups or provide extended answers to questions in order to develop their oracy and literacy skills. Opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills are also more evident in lessons and enhanced by their use of on-line learning resources both in school and at home. Lessons have a greater focus on the learning needs of all students and lesson plans now routinely identify learning outcomes for students of differing ability. In the best lessons, specific activities and support are in place to meet the learning needs of all students. However, this is not consistently the case across the school.

Students continue to be aware of their targets and their current level of performance. However, they now have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve. This is due to improvements made to the quality of written feedback they receive. However, despite this improvement variation in the quality of written feedback to students across the school still exists and remains an area in need of further improvement.

Students' behaviour in lessons is good and they show courtesy and consideration for each other. However, a small number of students are not arriving punctually at the start of lessons. Students' attendance has continued to improve although it remains similar to the national average.

The headteacher has continued to provide the school with clear and effective leadership which is focused on improving teaching and raising students' achievement. He is being well supported by the senior leadership team. The school development plan addresses the issues raised by the previous inspection well. In particular, the plan now contains specific and measurable success criteria against which the impact of actions can be monitored and evaluated. The governing body is monitoring the implementation and impact of the action plan well and beginning to provide the school with an effective level of challenge as well as support. The good school tracking system is now being used more effectively by senior and middle leaders to analyse the performance of both individual students and different groups. Effective action is being taken to address any underperformance and as a result, achievement across the school is rising and the difference in progress between different groups of students is beginning to close. The school informs parents of students' progress towards their targets five times a year. This information is now available to parents through an on-line portal so that it can be readily accessed. However, the surveying of parents' and carers' views about the effectiveness of this system and other actions to involve them more fully in their child's learning are at an early stage of development.

The school's specialist status in business and enterprise has played an important role in its improvement. For example, it has enabled the purchasing of information and communication technology resources which have had a positive impact on teaching and students' learning. Specialist status has also enabled students to be exposed to

a greater variety of learning contexts through business and community seminars and visits.

The local authority's statement of action addresses the issues raised by the previous inspection well and it is closely linked to the school's raising achievement plan. The school and the local authority are working together well to improve provision and student outcomes. The local authority is monitoring the implementation and impact of school actions well and effective support has been provided for governance, leadership and management and teaching.

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

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise attainment, especially in English, by:
 - improving planning so that teachers take full account of information about the achievement of individuals and groups of students, so that teaching meets the learning needs of all
 - using a greater variety of resources, activities and contexts to make learning more interesting and engaging for all students
 - ensuring students can work independently, show initiative and take responsibility for their learning
 - providing informative feedback to students so they clearly understand how to improve
 - taking every opportunity in lessons across all subjects to develop students' oracy and literacy
 - involving parents and carers more in students' learning.

- Improve school monitoring and development planning at all levels to ensure all students have the opportunity to do as well as they are able to, by:
 - including measurable success criteria so that the progress can be accurately judged and used to inform future actions
 - developing the new tracking system so that the outcomes for all groups of students are closely monitored
 - using monitoring data so that leaders and managers at all levels can continually adapt provision to meet the needs of all groups.