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Mrs Gloria Dilling  
Summerfield Education Centre  
Brackleys Way  
Solihull  
B92 8QE

Dear Mrs Dilling

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Summerfield Education Centre (formerly Hobs Moat Centre)**

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and colleagues in the local authority gave when I inspected your school on 4 July 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since its inspection, the Hobs Moat Centre has had a name change and is now known as the Summerfield Education Centre. Furthermore, nine new appointments of teachers and classroom assistants represent a significant change of the staff team. The Year 11 students who attended the Centre during this school year have now left. Several of the younger students are newly admitted and some of them are not yet settled or behaving appropriately.

As a result of the inspection on 15 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.

Achievement is satisfactory. Students admitted to the school are mainly in the last two years of compulsory education, having been excluded or at risk of exclusion. Attainment is low as most have underachieved in the past. When they arrive they exhibit behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and many have a pronounced antipathy towards school and learning. Progress in the beginning is uneven as it is adversely affected by some students not attending regularly, poor behaviour and negative attitudes which at times get in the way of everyone's learning. Over the past three years, outcomes for leavers show students' attendance improves. They settle down to work and learn in a steady fashion. Students achieve the

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accreditation enabling them to move onto their choice of further education courses or employment. For many this includes success in GCSEs and in adult literacy and numeracy tests, although for higher attaining students this does not reflect their true capabilities. The quantity and range of accreditation has increased each year over the past three years, as have the proportions of students going onto further education, employment or training.

New appointments and the impact of the headteacher's management of teaching are improving its quality. There has been a clear lead given to teachers on identifying learning objectives, devising effective approaches to learning and refining questioning techniques. The positive impact of this lead was evident in the lessons observed. Teachers plan lessons in detail and introduce learning objectives clearly. A structured start, middle and end to lessons is not always achieved to give the changes in focus that creates good engagement and learning. Students arrive at some lessons unsettled and not ready to learn, thus making it difficult for teachers to implement their plans. The management of students' behaviour, overall, is not robust enough to deal effectively with their occasional outbursts. At times, these place their own and others' safety at risk.

The curriculum is appropriate to the needs of students and gives sharp focus to opportunities for accreditation. Courses provide teachers with well-defined assessment criteria and this underpins expectations of the progress students should make. Teachers exert expectations effectively which ensure, over time, that students are supported in sustaining a sufficient rate of progress to complete their courses. Progress is tracked systematically and kept under close scrutiny. This helps teachers with planning lessons and keeping a clear overview of progress. Recent investment in fixed and portable computer resources, including digital whiteboards, has improved students' opportunities for learning. Teachers are trained in the use of this technology and are incorporating it into their lessons. They use these resources across the curriculum satisfactorily and now offer GCSE and other information and communication technology accreditation which has led to examination good results.

A management committee is established with a full membership and meets regularly. Members have the expertise and experience to support and challenge the school and they are kept well informed of its work. The committee's roles and responsibilities, in relation to fulfilling its duties and holding the school to account, are not firmly established. Training for performing an effective role is scheduled. Safeguarding duties are managed satisfactorily and the committee has set the school the task of improving students' attendance. This has had a good impact.

A detailed account has been drawn up of the school's community initiatives which are evaluated in terms of their promotion of community cohesion. This enables the headteacher to plan further developments. Initiatives foster positive links between students and their community, such as the help they give to adults with learning difficulties attending a local centre.

Good support from the local authority and that gained through links developed with schools has been instrumental in the school's improvement. In its inspection, the school was judged to have a good capacity to sustain improvement. The headteacher is developing the staff into a cohesive staff team. Together they are maintaining the school's capacity to sustain improvement which is evident in the improved outcomes for students.

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

Alan Lemon  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Implement plans for the new management committee to support the work of the Centre.
- Ensure that all staff:
  - share a vision of what good progress looks like in a lesson to inform their planning and help them judge the lesson's effectiveness
  - develop questioning techniques to encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills
  - are supported by laptops and interactive whiteboards and appropriate training in their use.
- Collate the various community initiatives undertaken across the Centre into a coherent plan.