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16 September 2011

Mr T Eastaugh  
Headteacher  
Spenn Valley Sports College  
Roberttown Lane  
Liversedge  
West Yorkshire  
WF15 7LX

Dear Mr Eastaugh,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Spenn Valley Sports College**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Thursday 15 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on Thursday 24 June 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Although it remains broadly average, students' attainment has risen substantially. For example, at the time of the last inspection, 37% of students gained five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics; the unvalidated results for 2011 indicate over 50% will achieve the same measure. Over the same period, results in English and mathematics have each risen by approximately 10 percentage points. However, not all results have followed a consistent upward trend: for example, in 2010, the English results went down before rising in 2011. The school's monitoring indicates that the improved results in 2011 can be maintained even where the cohort of students has weaker attainment on entry.

Measures of students' progress have improved. However, this is not a consistent picture: for example, while the proportion of students making the expected progress in mathematics has risen, improvements are less evident in English. The school has correctly identified that more girls than boys make the expected progress, particularly in English, and have appropriate plans in place to address this. Overall results show that students continue to make good progress in vocational subjects, including those relating to the school's specialisms.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

School records show that more lessons are good or better than at the time of the last inspection and this is supported by evidence gathered during the inspection. A positive and consistent approach to managing behaviour has contributed to students' improved attitudes and progress. In the more successful lessons, teachers select a range of classroom activities that promote discussion and engage students in their learning; they use questioning to probe students' understanding and plan for different abilities within the class. In the weaker lessons, not all students are sufficiently challenged and some rely too much on teacher guidance. Low levels of literacy continue to be a barrier to learning for a minority of students. The school has made a start in strengthening the development of literacy across the curriculum through staff training and planning, but the full impact of these actions has yet to be realised. Plans for developing numeracy skills more systematically are at an early stage.

Leaders and managers have a realistic view of the school and were able to estimate accurately the school's GCSE results in 2011. Improvement plans have an appropriate focus on improving outcomes for students. Management actions have been particularly effective in improving attendance. Overall attendance figures rose from low in 2010 to broadly average in 2011; moreover, 2011 saw an impressive drop in the proportion of students who are persistent absentees. Leaders appreciate the importance of maintaining these higher attendance figures.

Leaders and managers have successfully deployed additional resources that have contributed to higher attainment in English and mathematics. In English, a new curriculum leader, a full complement of staff, closer tracking of progress and personalised support have all played a part in raising standards. Additional links with other local schools are helping staff to share good practice and benchmark their provision against that in other schools.

GCSE results in the school's specialist subjects are among the best in the school. Courses offered lead to a broad range of qualifications and teachers from the specialist curriculum areas contribute to leading whole-school developments in teaching and learning.

Staff from the local authority, including the School Improvement Partner, have supported the development of capacity within the school well. Support for mathematics and science has been good; support for English has been less consistent.

Inspectors found no evidence of any weakness in the school's safeguarding procedures.

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

Paul Chambers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2011

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place Thursday 24 June 2010**

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - prioritising the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students can understand and achieve.
  
- Increase the proportion of good and better lessons by ensuring that:
  - they seek to interest and challenge students
  - work is accurately matched to the needs of all students
  - students are engaged in their learning
  - marking clearly indicates how students can improve their work.