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Mr Guest  
Headteacher  
The Sir William Robertson High School, Welbourn  
Main Road  
Welbourn  
LN5 0PA

Dear Mr Guest

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Sir William Robertson High School, Welbourn**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 October 2011 together with Aune Turkson-Jones, additional inspector, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the pupils that we met.

Since the previous inspection in May 2010, there have been significant changes in the leadership of the school. Five new middle leaders have been appointed and a new Chair of the Governing Body. A statutory notice has been published by the governing body to open a sixth form from September 2012.

As a result of the inspection on 10 May 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Standards in the school have risen in recent years from average to above average levels. The percentage of pupils gaining five good grades at GCSE has risen sharply from 70% in 2009 to 88% in 2011, while the percentage gaining five good grades including English and mathematics has risen from 49% in 2009 to 57% in 2011. The progress that pupils make has also increased from below average levels in 2009 to average levels in 2011. School data show that attainment and the progress that pupils make are both set to rise again in 2012 and our observations confirmed this. These improvements are the result of planned developments in teaching and learning, the introduction of applied courses at Key Stage 4 to cater for a broader range of ability, and the targeted support for individual students identified as underachieving.



During the monitoring inspection we observed 22 part lessons, nearly all of which were good or better. The majority of lessons are planned well and cater for the needs of all abilities in the class. In the best lessons seen, learning outcomes are developed progressively and are linked explicitly to levels or grades. As a result, the planned activities are matched closely to students' ability levels and help to build on what they have learnt before. Teachers use these outcomes to clarify the learning that is expected and to check the progress being made in the lesson. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of their current working levels and what they need to do to improve further. All lessons seen shared a number of good key aspects: the use of assessment to ensure appropriate pitch; the degree of challenge, particularly for high-ability pupils; effective oral feedback on how to accelerate progress; and targeted questioning that challenges pupils and deepens their understanding. However, in some lessons written feedback was not sufficiently precise to guide the next steps in learning, and sometimes the comments made were not followed up. In these lessons, learning was slower.

The school has introduced a systematic approach to lesson monitoring, with formalised arrangements that include regular observations by senior and middle leaders, regular learning walks and work scrutiny. Opportunities for paired working enable coaching of less experienced school leaders as well as the moderation of evaluations. Heads of department discuss their findings with senior leaders and any identified weaknesses are included in the department or school improvement plan, which is then checked regularly. It is clear from the school's detailed quality assurance records that teaching and learning have improved steadily since the last inspection. This is corroborated by the inspection findings. Teachers have improved their understanding of the components of good teaching, a useful policy document has been produced to help teachers to plan and deliver good lessons, and good practice has been shared. Teachers have also been helped to make better use of assessment and tracking data to guide their planning. As a result, more progress is being made by pupils across the school.

The school has considered carefully how to ensure that a higher proportion of students attain well in modern foreign languages. It recognised that the GCSE courses available in these subjects did not cater well for the needs and interests of all pupils who were entered. In response it has adjusted its curriculum and now offers a recognised national vocational qualification alongside its suite of GCSEs. Of the 90% of pupils who study a language at Key Stage 4, nearly half left the school with a good GCSE grade or equivalent in 2011. This represents an increase on the previous year and is significantly higher than the national average.

The school's specialist languages department is being used effectively to raise standards, particularly through its work with its partner primary schools in supporting language learning so that pupils have a basic grounding in a language before they come to the school.

Since the last inspection middle leadership has been strengthened through training and support to heads of department in monitoring and improving their work. The school improvement plan defines clear priorities and the school is working steadily towards meeting its clearly defined success criteria. Consequently, there are positive signs of improving trends in most areas of the school's work, and it has a stronger capacity for further improvement.

The school has received some useful support through its local authority consultants and advisers, who have provided additional help and resources aimed at improving provision in mathematics, modern foreign languages and history. Examination board advisers have supported the effective introduction of applied courses at Key Stage 4.

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

Trevor Riddiough  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
  - ensuring that teachers use information about students' targets and current achievement to plan and deliver their lessons, ensuring activities match the levels of attainment of different groups of students, particularly the most able
  - raising expectations about the quality and usefulness of feedback to students, so that consistency of practice is achieved
  - ensuring that a higher proportion of students attain A\*–C in modern foreign languages.
  
- Achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
  - increasing the rigour of systems to monitor the impact of teaching on learning
  - ensuring that weaknesses are speedily rectified and reassessed.