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Mr Stuart Muir
Headteacher
Dedworth Middle School
Smiths Lane
Windsor
Berkshire
SL4 5PE

Dear Mr Muir

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Dedworth Middle School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 2011, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to staff and students who made me feel very welcome and helped me to make the most of the time in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 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.

Students are very keen and enthusiastic learners and behave very well in lessons eager to engage in the range of opportunities. The Key Stage 1 information for students indicates that attainment is slightly above the national average by the end of Year 2. The school's assessment information shows that they are below national expectation when they join the school in Year 5. The school ensures that students settle well and make increasing levels of progress. By the time they undertake Key Stage 2 national tests at the end of Year 6, students' attainment in the school has improved and is much closer to the national average for English and mathematics. The increasingly positive progress made in Years 5 and 6 continues so that students now leave at the end of Year 8 with attainment in English and mathematics that is above what is expected for their age. Students also have a wide range of positive experiences across the school. The school has developed the teaching of literacy and



numeracy across all subject areas so that the skills developed are practised with increasing consistency beyond English and mathematics lessons. Students benefit from the range of specialist subject knowledge and this is enhanced by the creative approach across the curriculum. There is a strong culture of sport and performing arts in the school that ensures students develop personal skills very well.

The senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and key areas for development. They have clear plans to move the school forward and have used the previous inspection with great effect in increasing the rate of improvement in the school. The school is now building a momentum with positive and enthusiastic staff that are improving their skills very well. Teachers are eager to improve still further and with increasing pace. The best of lessons demonstrated good subject knowledge and understanding of individual students' needs. Teachers and staff have very positive relationships with students. Students want to contribute and do well because of the ethos of success that is dominant across the school. Where teaching is not so effective, teachers talk too much and do not allow students to get on and practise the essential skills being taught. Expectations are increasingly high and students meet these expectations with great pride but at times need to be stretched even further. Opportunities to work more independently are not always provided, particularly for the higher attaining students. Students are very clear about the level they are working at and most understand what they need to do to move forward. Leaders in the school have very effective systems in the school to develop teaching. Coaching and team teaching is used with increasing impact to hone teaching practice and increase the consistency and quality of teaching and learning. The school tracks progress with increasing accuracy and precision. Staff are refining systems to ensure that they have a clear picture of the progress of all students and the impact that strategies are having. The needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early by the school and appropriate opportunities are then provided. The school is increasingly effective at identifying the impact of its work with these students. This is being refined further but already ensures that students' progress is not significantly different from other groups of students in the school. The clear sense of purpose and ambition in the school means that the school staff work well together and morale is high.

The school has been supported well by the school improvement partner, who is able to challenge leaders and have a clear understanding of the school circumstances and issues relating to middle schools.

I hope that you have found the monitoring visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. I wish you all well in the onward journey. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics and English by the end of Key Stage 2 by developing cross-curricular planning so that pupils have regular opportunities to improve their key literacy and numeracy skills in all subject areas.
- Improve systems of monitoring and evaluation in order to:
 - identify more precisely the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning to ensure that more teaching is as good as the best
 - measure more accurately the effectiveness of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in lessons by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use clear success criteria so they and the pupils can accurately measure how much progress pupils make in each lesson
 - provide high quality oral and written feedback so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve and can take the necessary action
 - make effective use of assessment information to plan learning activities which fully meet pupils' differing needs.