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Mr M Citro
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Citro

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Pent Valley Technology College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Ann Sydney and I inspected your school on 29 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please convey our thanks to your students and to the chair of your governing body for the help they provided.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 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:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Students' attainment has risen since the previous inspection and progress and learning have improved. Better monitoring and tracking systems helped to secure the 2011 improvement in GCSE results and a further rise is confidently predicted for 2012. In part, this has already been secured because of GCSE results already gained by students through early entry. The school knows its students well and can identify with accuracy the progress being made by different groups of students. This analysis is aiding the school in target setting and personalising the curriculum to meet



individual needs. Most students are making at least satisfactory progress. Work undertaken with students with English as an additional language is good. Many of these students, some of whom are recent arrivals in the country, make good progress. Student outcomes have been further enhanced through curriculum innovation. The growing vocational dimension to the curriculum, especially in Years 10 and 11, is successfully leading to improved outcomes, with students gaining more qualifications. This is boosting confidence and improving the opportunities students have beyond the age of 16.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving teaching and learning, though inconsistencies remain. A majority of lessons observed featured either good or outstanding learning, though there was a wide variation and a minority of lessons were no better than satisfactory. These outcomes reflect the school's own monitoring. Learning is most effective when students are set challenging and interesting tasks and where they are required to work independently or in small groups. This was clearly demonstrated in a physical education lesson and in vocational areas such as carpentry, hairdressing and child care. In the less effective lessons, creativity is stifled because teachers do too much of the work and the subject matter is not consistently presented in interesting and relevant ways. In too many lessons, opportunities to hone students' literacy skills are not consistently seized and some of the written tasks set lack challenge. The dissemination of good teaching practice is progressing satisfactorily. The school is aware of the need to extend the role played by the most effective teachers in modelling good, or better, practice.

Satisfactory improvements have been made in students' learning and their attitudes to learning. Students of all abilities work with interest and enthusiasm when independence is encouraged well. Behaviour is generally good in lessons but, when lessons become too teacher focused, concentration is inclined to slip and some students become restless and inattentive. This slows the pace of the lesson and impedes the quality of learning. The school has adopted some interesting ideas to promote student participation. Students are involved in reviewing lessons and are encouraged to offer feedback on the teaching they receive in a number of ways, including by text and Twitter. In discussions with students, however, not all seemed to be fully aware of these opportunities.

Specialist technology status continues to confer benefits and the school has been creative in developing technology in its widest sense. In some areas the school has moved away from traditional GCSE examinations in technology subjects and is offering other forms of accreditation. The successful and expanding vocational curriculum is an example of how technology status is being implemented.

Improvements in self-evaluation have clearly taken place since inspectors last visited the school. Satisfactory support has been offered by the local authority and has helped the school to improve, especially in terms of monitoring classroom practice. Although inconsistencies remain, improvements in attainment and achievement, teaching and learning,



the curriculum and the way students' progress is tracked and monitored have all improved. These developments indicate satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Bill Stoneham
Additional inspector



Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring that lessons are interesting and relevant to students' experiences
 - extending the influence of subject leaders in ensuring consistently good learning and progress in disseminating good practice within their subjects.

- Improve students' learning and their attitudes to lessons by:
 - developing their skills to work more independently
 - implementing the plan to promote student responsibility by involving them in establishing a school charter.