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26 March 2012

Mr M Conn  
Bexhill High School  
Gunters Lane  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN39 4BY

Dear Mr Conn

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bexhill High School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Cyndi Millband, Graham Saltmarsh and I inspected your school on 23 March 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey our thanks to your students, staff and governing body for the help they provided.

As a result of the inspection on 19–20 January 2011, 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.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Students' achievement is improving. Students with autism in the school's designated unit are doing especially well. Good progress has been made in ensuring that monitoring and tracking systems are more accurate; intervention strategies are being deployed effectively to bolster the progress of those who may be at risk of underachieving. Students are better informed about their target grades and what they need to do to improve. GCSE results are expected to rise in 2012. In part, this improvement has already been secured through the school's early entry programme.

Better achievement is being secured through curriculum innovation, especially in design and technology. The curriculum continues to evolve with vocational subjects, such as catering, hairdressing and construction available. This has led to marked improvements in students' enthusiasm for technology-related subjects and improvements in achievement.

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Some barriers to improving achievement further exist. A small minority of students do not attend with sufficient regularity. The school is well aware of this issue and has identified target groups with whom to work. In lessons, a minority of staff are not consistently using the available tracking data to plan for all learning needs.

### **The quality of teaching**

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving teaching and learning. Though the majority of lessons observed featured good learning, there was some 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 some English lessons and in vocational areas such as construction and catering. In the less-effective lessons, creativity is stifled because teachers talk too much and do too much of the work. At the start of some lessons, there is a lack purpose because there is no properly planned starter activity, and opportunities for students to showcase their learning are not consistently seized because recap sessions are used inconsistently. 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 best practice.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school provides a safe working environment for its students and the thoughtfully designed main social area provides an attractive venue for students to socialise. Behaviour is generally good in lessons. Students of all abilities work with interest and enthusiasm when independence is encouraged. When lessons become too teacher-focused, concentration is inclined to slip, and some students become restless and inattentive, slowing pace and impeding learning. Staff maintain a vigilant focus on ensuring students behave appropriately. The curriculum ensures that there is a continuous focus on the students' social and moral development; this contributes well to the harmonious community that has been created.

### **The quality of leadership and management of the school**

Good progress in development planning and self-evaluation has taken place since inspectors last visited. Staff at all levels now have a clear focus on raising standards. Satisfactory support has been offered by the local authority and has fostered improvements, especially in English and mathematics. Although inconsistencies remain, good improvements in achievement, the curriculum and the way students' progress is tracked and monitored, and satisfactory improvements in teaching, indicate good 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 January 2011**

- Increase the proportion of good or outstanding teaching and learning, and enable staff to achieve greater consistency in teaching, through:
  - more regular monitoring, support and help for teachers to move their practice to the next level
  - ensuring all students have a detailed understanding of the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Ensure senior managers link priorities more closely between the school and subject development plan to ensure a coherent approach to school improvement.
- Introduce strategies to make the design and technology specialism more influential throughout the curriculum.