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17 October 2012

Paul Foxley  
Headteacher  
Purbrook Park School  
Park Avenue  
Waterlooville  
PO7 5DS

Dear Mr Foxley

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Purbrook Park School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 October 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to everyone who gave up their time to meet with me.

There have been significant changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection. A number of teachers left at the end of the last school year; several new teachers joined the school in September.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 March 2012, 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 is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, increased this year. There were particular increases in the attainment of boys, a concern in 2011. Attainment in science, which was low in 2011, also improved. However, patterns of achievement across different subjects remain variable.

Teaching has improved significantly. There is much less inadequate teaching and more good teaching. Relationships between teachers and students are positive and friendly. Lessons typically meet students' individual needs more closely. In less-effective lessons, students are sometimes given too long to complete activities. The pace of the lesson then slows and some students do not make enough progress. In these lessons, teachers do not do enough to check individual students' progress

when they work individually or in groups. Some boys in particular can then lose concentration and waste time. Marking is typically more frequent and helpful to students. Teachers across the school now use a common approach when they mark work.

Behaviour and bullying are now being managed more effectively. As a result, students feel safer. Students say that bullying incidents were sometimes dealt with poorly or too slowly in the past. They say that this has changed and that any incidents are now dealt with quickly and firmly. Teachers use a common system to respond to misbehaviour in the classroom. This has established a firmer and more consistent response across the school. However, students say that a few staff, particularly those new to the school, do not follow the system correctly. The school now operates an on-call system: any misbehaving student is removed from the lesson, reducing disruption. Students who misbehave persistently or more seriously spend time isolated from other students. These systems are working well and are not being overused.

Behaviour in lessons is now often good, although some older boys in particular lack motivation. Behaviour around the site has also improved: it is now calmer and more orderly. Leaders recognised that lunchtime was a difficult time in a relatively cramped site. They increased the amount of adult supervision and introduced a range of additional activities. This has helped to improve behaviour, although it can still be a little boisterous.

The leadership and management of the school are now much more secure. The headteacher and other senior leaders are providing strong and clear direction. The senior leadership team has been completely restructured; roles and responsibilities are clearer. Senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Good plans are in place to support further improvements. The work of the governing body has also been strengthened. A core committee of governors commit considerable time to the school. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is supported by a programme of joint monitoring with senior leaders.

Lessons are observed regularly to check quality. A range of support is provided to help teachers to improve. This is clearly differentiated to reflect individual teachers' skills and levels of competence. Stronger practitioners are used to support others. Tough action has been taken to deal with inadequate teaching: in many cases, teachers have improved their practice; in some cases, they have left the school.

Much is being done to develop middle leadership. Middle leaders say that senior leaders now support them more effectively. A new system has been introduced to guide the way in which middle leaders monitor and check the work of their departments. This is bringing greater consistency. The skill and precision with which individual middle leaders analyse strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas are variable. Some evaluations are precise and penetrating; many are not.

Senior leaders recognised that the way in which they were setting targets for students and measuring their progress was flawed. A new system is being introduced this year. This is well thought out and is being implemented sensibly. Individual students' targets are now based more clearly on their ability and potential.

The statement of action and plan produced by the local authority meet all requirements. The school is benefiting from a wide range of valuable assistance from the local authority. A consultant visits regularly to monitor progress and offer support. Specialist advisers are providing more specific or subject-based advice, for example to support improvements in behaviour and science. The headteacher and local authority work very closely together to ensure that any support meets the school's needs closely.

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

Christopher Russell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- Strengthen the capacity of the school's leaders to secure rapid improvement by:
  - ensuring that the governing body robustly challenges senior leaders and holds them to account for the school's performance
  - clarifying lines of accountability and implementing effective performance management arrangements for staff at all levels
  - developing senior leaders' skills so they can rigorously monitor and accurately evaluate the school's work
  - analysing the information collected during monitoring activities to identify appropriate priorities and plan strategically for improvement
  - ensuring that action plans are sharply focused, include measurable targets for students' outcomes and explicitly set out roles, responsibilities and timescales.
  
- Improve standards of behaviour by:
  - ensuring that the systems for preventing and tackling bullying are rigorously applied in order to reduce the number of incidents and give students and parents and carers confidence that they are effective
  - increasing students' motivation to learn through high-quality, stimulating lessons where students' needs are met and they are actively involved
  - ensuring all staff are consistent in applying the school's behaviour management strategies
  - teaching students to be considerate of each other's needs so that all students feel safe in school.
  
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching in order to improve students' achievement by:
  - sharing the good practice in teaching and learning already within the school
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment data to plan learning activities which meet needs and match the abilities of all students
  - providing more opportunities in lessons for students to apply their knowledge and develop their skills in working independently
  - ensuring that all students' work is marked promptly and provides helpful feedback so that students know how well they are doing and how to improve.