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4 December 2012

Mrs Linda Rodham  
Wellfield Community School - A Specialist Maths and Computing College  
North Road  
East Wingate  
County Durham  
TS28 5AX

Dear Mrs Rodham

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Wellfield Community School - A Specialist Maths and Computing College**

Following my visit to your school on 04 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, senior leaders and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The school's single central record was reviewed.

#### **Context**

Since the previous inspection leadership has been strengthened. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed who has responsibility for leading English and communication skills. Another assistant headteacher has taken on the responsibility for disabled students and those with special educational needs. The school is in the early stages of considering becoming an academy.

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

The headteacher has wasted no time in acting on the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Supported by senior leaders and members of the governing body, she has made significant inroads in wiping out inadequate teaching. Middle leaders have begun to get better at checking the quality of lessons and students' work. This is because senior leaders and consultants from the local authority have been training them. The headteacher has found support in resolving staffing difficulties particularly helpful.

Leaders of different subjects and other middle leaders have helped teachers to give students really useful advice on how to improve their work. Students' attendance has also improved but there are still some differences in how well different groups of students attend.

The school's development plan is detailed. It picks out the most important things the school needs to do and spells out how they will be done. It is providing a sound foundation for improvement. Sometimes it is not clear enough about what success will look like. This could make it more difficult for the school to measure the progress it is making in the coming months. The school's leaders have started to meet regularly with the local authority and members of the governing body to check on how the school is doing in making improvements and making sure that it happens quickly.

Members of the governing body have also begun to improve the way they gather information about the quality of the school's work. They have started to make sure their visits to different subject areas are focused on students' progress and they are asking searching questions. Some members of the governing body have had extra training to help them understand the school's progress information and what good teaching looks like. Most members of the governing body have embraced the need to improve quickly but this is not true for everyone. Members of the governing body are also developing ways of checking the views of parents and carers. This is still in the early stages of development.

The local authority has provided the school with sound support. The headteacher has found support in resolving staffing difficulties particularly helpful. The statement of action provides the headteacher and other leaders with useful advice and support in maintaining the pace of improvement.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**