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16 January 2013

Mr Pepe Di'Iasio  
Principal  
Wales High School  
Storth Lane  
Kiveton Park  
Sheffield  
S26 5QQ

Dear Mr Di'Iasio

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Wales High School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, members of the governing body and the Chief Executive of the academy. The academy improvement plan was evaluated. The headteacher accompanied the inspector on a series of brief lesson visits. Leaders' written feedback to teachers following lesson observations was evaluated along with other internal checks on the quality of the academy's work.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection the academy has made two new appointments to mathematics and these teachers are due to take up their posts at the beginning of the summer term. Senior leaders have reorganised their responsibilities and this has been used to strengthen leadership of mathematics. One member of the senior leadership team is on an extended absence.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has maintained the momentum of improvement described in the previous inspection report. Senior and middle leaders are responding positively to his high expectations. Leaders have maintained a regular programme of checking on the quality of teaching and learning. This has helped them to identify where teaching requires improvement and put in place intensive support to enable teachers to rapidly improve their practice. Leaders do not put enough emphasis on the different rates of progress made by different groups of students. Teachers have opportunities to share the good and outstanding teaching in the academy but this is not regular or systematic enough to have a noticeable effect. Where teaching is inadequate leaders have wasted no time in taking swift and decisive action.

The academy's improvement plan has been amended to prioritise the areas requiring improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report. The actions it outlines are clear and the timings are in keeping with the academy's commitment to rapid improvement. It is not clear enough about how progress will be checked in the short term.

There is still a lot of work to be done in improving students' literacy skills across all subjects. The academy has completed an audit and leaders fully understand the scale of the task ahead. The trustees and members of the governing body are self-critical and keen to improve their work. Since the last inspection, their questions to leaders have become more searching. The trustees and the governing body are planning to review the ways in which they collect first hand evidence about the work of the academy. They remain committed and determined to secure rapid improvement the academy.

Senior leaders, governors and the trustees are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the academy, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- improve senior leaders focus on the rates of progress made by different groups of students
- use the outcomes of the literacy audit to rapidly improve students' reading, writing and speaking skills across all subject areas
- provide teachers with systematic opportunities to see good and better teaching.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The academy is drawing on a range of partners to support improvement. The trustees have engaged a consultant headteacher to offer support and challenge to the headteacher to ensure the rate of improvement is sustained. A consultant in mathematics has provided effective support in mathematics which has helped the academy to prepare Year 11 students for their forthcoming examinations. The school is reviewing its policy of students sitting examinations early.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and as below.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The lead inspector.