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20 March 2013

Mrs Carolyn Dickinson
Acting Headteacher
Worthing High School
South Farm Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN14 7AR

Dear Mrs Dickinson,

Special measures monitoring inspection of Worthing High School

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in December 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, I met with you, the Chair of the Governing Body and board of trustees and members of the school's leadership team. I evaluated the governor's statement of action and the school's improvement plans, which you and your team use to monitor the school's work. I also accompanied you on a tour around the school and made brief visits to a few lessons.

Context

The school became an academy converter one week prior to the inspection that took place in December. Prior to this, the local authority had provided governors with two additional Advanced Skills Teachers to help improve standards in English and

science. This support, combined with leadership advice, has continued but will cease after Easter. Since the inspection, two teachers have left the school whose posts are currently being filled temporarily. A further three teachers will leave at Easter. Permanent appointments have been made to each of these vacancies, two with effect from June and the rest in September. Representatives from the Department for Education visited the school in March and discussions were held with the governors and the acting headteacher about how the school has progressed since the previous inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Following the inspection in December, trustees, governors and school leaders have begun to take decisive action to address the school's weaknesses.

With the help of the local authority, they have put together a comprehensive statement of action, into which the school's improvement plans have been incorporated. The statement of action is now underpinning leadership activity. It covers each of the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection and specifies well-targeted actions to bring these about. However, some minor adjustments need to be made to strengthen the ways in which the effectiveness of planned actions is measured. You have already begun to revise the statement of action, so that progress can be more accurately measured.

Governors understand which aspects of the school's work needs to improve most urgently and they have a good awareness of the progress being made in these areas. They have re-structured the ways in which they monitor the school's effectiveness and they are challenging you and the school's leaders more effectively. A standards committee has been established, to which you and the school's leaders report on progress in relation to the statement of action. The school has recently joined the South Downs Academy Teaching Alliance in order that governors and leaders may draw on the expertise within the alliance to corroborate their judgements. However, governors have yet to undergo an external review of their practice, which they recognise as a priority, as well as appointing a permanent headteacher.

The senior leadership team has been extended to include the new leaders of science, mathematics and English. Senior leaders are now more visible around the school, during and between lessons. The staff training programme has been re-vamped and senior leaders regularly observe lessons. Weekly training sessions which are compulsory for identified teachers, require those teachers to reflect on their practice and learn from what works best. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and staff and students are clear about what is expected of them and the

consequences of non-compliance. Staff spoken to during the visit welcome these decisive actions and feel that lessons are calmer and teaching is improving. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher posts are being filled temporarily. Although the leadership team has been extended, there will be no additional support from after Easter which places limitations on leaders' capacity to bring about rapid improvements. You have recognised this and intend to draw on expertise from within the South Downs Academy Teaching Alliance.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The trustee's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the DfE Academies Advisors Unit. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Farmer
Her Majesty's Inspector